West Piedmont Planning Dispatch

Winter 2012/2013

West Piedmont WIB Awarded Building Collaborative Communities Grant

On February 5th, Governor McDonnell announced, via a press release, that the West Piedmont Workforce Investment Board (WIB) was one of five recipients of a grant awarded by the Building Collaborative Communities Program, which “promotes regional economic collaboration in economically-distressed areas that stimulate job creation, economic development and provide a significant return on state investment.” The West Piedmont Planning District Commission will partner with the Workforce Investment Board to complete activities associated with this grant, which was applied for through the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.

The Workforce Investment Board was awarded $50,000 to “Build Capacity for Entrepreneurship Development through Education and Public Awareness.” Activities the grant will fund include an entrepreneurial program for grades K-12, teacher training, a summer camp program, and other activities. The Workforce Investment Board is responsible for funding and monitoring the region’s four Virginia workforce Centers and employment services and training programs for employers, jobseekers, and youth.

Appalachian Regional Commission Grants

On February 4th, the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development announced the recipients of 11 Appalachian Regional Commission grants totaling $2.2 million. The grants are “aimed at generating economic development in the Appalachian region…[by] funding projects which support job creation, asset-based development, workforce development and entrepreneurship.” Four of these grants were awarded to entities within the West Piedmont Planning District and include the following:

- $500,000 to the New College Foundation for the construction of New College Institute’s “Building on Baldwin” project, which will be a 50,000 square-foot building on the Baldwin Block in uptown Martinsville. The facility will provide training and education in advanced manufacturing, next-generation health care, and entrepreneurship.

- $100,000 to the A.L. Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Genedge Alliance) to assist with the implementation of the “E3” (Economy, Energy, and Environment) Initiative, which will develop, strengthen, and expand manufacturing capabilities, while retaining jobs and identifying energy, environmental, and economic improvements in lean manufacturing techniques for local businesses in the City of Martinsville, and Henry and Patrick Counties.

- $32,000 to the Artisans Center of Virginia to promote regional partnerships to advance economic development, encourage activities to diversify the economic base, enhance entrepreneurial activities, and provide opportunities for entrepreneurship education and outreach programs via development of the artisan trail.

- $56,838 to Patrick Henry Community College to facilitate the expansion of the College’s High-demand Occupational Programs for Employment (HOPE) Program, which would include the implementation of a 12-week training program that would offer soft/core skills and vocational training for hard-to-serve individuals to obtain gainful employment.
West Piedmont Planning District Commission staff have been busy preparing updates for the West Piedmont Economic Development District’s 2013 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) update. On February 12, the CEDS Working Committee reviewed and approved the final draft of the CEDS, and recommended that the full CEDS Committee (The West Piedmont Planning District Board of Commissioners) approve the 2013 CEDS document at its next board meeting schedule for March 28. The CEDS is the guiding document to advance economic development strategies in the region.

Recent Events

- In early December, the U.S. Census Bureau released 2007—2011 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates. The data includes the most up-to-date demographic information available from the Census Bureau and, for the first time, includes data available by Zip Code Tabulation Area.
- In January, the University of Virginia’s Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service released the 2012 annual official population estimates for Virginia and localities within the state. This information is invaluable for informing municipal officials, planners, and others involved in the public and private sectors about population trends within the Commonwealth.

Encouragement of Local Collaboration through State Incentives

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) embarked on a study to assess costs and benefits to the State of Virginia of incentivizing, through financial and other means, the collaboration of localities with respect to capital facility construction projects and other operating services. As part of this Study Mandate, referred to as HJR 570, more than 100 stakeholders including state and local agency staff, directors of planning district commissions (PDCs), regional program and project staff, and government associations were interviewed for input.

The study found that in many cases, efforts by localities to collaborate to jointly undertake projects or deliver services have resulted in service improvements and cost efficiencies. JLARC identified 13 opportunities through which local governments would be able to collaborate, which the state could incentivize; such collaborative efforts would result in benefits to local governments, their citizens, and in some cases, the state. Examples of collaboration identified in the study include planning and colocation of capital construction projects, sharing of staff and resources, and mutual aid associated with operating services.

The participation of PDCs (the PDC participation rate was 100 percent) was critical to this study because these organizations’ input resulted in JLARC exploring collaborative opportunities among workforce/career readiness programs, emergency communications, and public utilities; PDCs identified the greatest collaborative opportunities to be among public utilities, transportation, environmental programs, workforce development, and emergency preparedness. Other sectors for potential collaboration identified by JLARC included K-12 education, public safety, human services, and public works.
Economic Trends in the West Piedmont Planning District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Civilian Labor Force</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Unemployment</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 2012</td>
<td>118,990</td>
<td>109,678</td>
<td>9,312</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 2012</td>
<td>119,400</td>
<td>110,169</td>
<td>9,231</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 2011</td>
<td>120,508</td>
<td>109,927</td>
<td>10,581</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Year Annual Average 2007 - 2011</td>
<td>120,381</td>
<td>109,353</td>
<td>11,028</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


FY 2013 Danville MPO Road Projects

The Danville Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), assisted by Dewberry Engineers, Inc., will be conducting two road studies in Fiscal Year (FY) 2013. The two roadways include Moorefield Bridge Road (Route 863) and Kentuck Road (Route 729).

Studies on the Moorefield Bridge Road alignment will extend from its intersection with Mount Cross Road (Route 750) to its intersection with Westover Drive (Route 51), inclusive of both of these intersections, and will involve the identification of areas along this roadway for spot improvements and the need for signalized traffic control for the purposes of enhancing traffic flow and safety along the roadway. The study will also determine the optimal intersection configuration at the roadway’s intersection with Mount Cross Road. Additionally, the study will evaluate the potential for a direct connection with U.S. 58 near its current intersection with Westover Drive.

The second roadway which will be studied during FY 2013 is Kentuck Road (Route 729), between its intersection with Little Creek Road (Route 732) and its intersection with South Boston Road (U.S. 58). As in the case of Moorefield Bridge Road, the study will identify the most effective locations for spot improvements and the need for signalized traffic control so as to enhance traffic flow and safety. The need for signalized traffic control will be studied at the intersections of Kentuck Road and Halifax Road (Route 655), Wilkerson Road (Route 730), Ringgold Industrial Parkway, and U.S. 58 to determine if any signal enhancements will be needed there.

Population Attributes of the West Piedmont Planning District

The table entitled Population Characteristics of the West Piedmont Planning District articulates past population counts for the region’s localities, as well as current figures and population projections.

The change in population between the 2000 Census and 2010 Census for most localities within the District reveals little change or a downward trend, with the exception of several communities including Franklin County and the Town of Stuart, which increased by 18.8 percent and 46.5 percent, respectively. Population change from the 2010 Census to the 2030 population projection by the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) reveals that Franklin County is expected to have the highest growth rate, at 21.9 percent, followed by the City of Martinsville, at 8.9 percent. Projected growth rates over this period for other localities in the region include 2 percent for Henry County, 1 percent for Patrick County, 0.3 percent for Pittsylvania County, and 0.5 percent for the City of Danville.
Retirement of Chairman James E. Astin from the WPPDC Board of Commissioners

James (Jim) E. Astin ended his service on the Board of Commissioners of the West Piedmont Planning District Commission on November 29, 2012. He was the longest-serving board member, providing 31 years of service to the Commission.

Much of Mr. Astin’s service on the board was in the role of treasurer. In addition, he had a lengthy tenure as Chairman of the PDC’s Transportation/Technical Advisory Committee.

Mr. Astin was often looked to for advice and leadership by member Commissioners and Planning District Commission staff, and is very well-respected among his peers.

Mr. Astin is a life-long resident of Pittsylvania County, and in addition to raising a family, has operated a business, a farm, and has been an active member of his church and of the Mount Cross Fire Department. Some of his favorite activities have included international travel and dance.

The West Piedmont Planning Commission Board of Commissioners wish Jim all the best and thank him for his dedication to his community.

- **Chairperson**—Albert K. “Buddy” Rawley, Jr., City of Danville
- **Vice Chairperson**—Bobby Thompson, Franklin County
- **Treasurer**—Kathy C. Lawson, City of Martinsville

2012 Commonwealth Transportation Fund State Revenue Collections

- The CTF is reporting annual revenue growth of 4.6 percent, greater than the revised forecasted growth rate of 2.8 percent.
- Motor vehicle Sales and Use tax collections continue to be strong, prompting an adjustment to the revenue forecast from (0.7) percent to 6.7 percent.
- Motor Fuels Tax collections year-to-date are up 3.5 percent from last year.
- The transportation share of the State Sales and Use Tax has grown by 5.6 percent year-to-date.
- CTF Revenues are ahead of the revised estimated annual growth rate by 1.8 percent.
- Construction expenditures have increased considerably, reflecting activity on major PPTA projects and an overall increase in construction activity.
- Maintenance Program year-end allocation balance is on track to meet the goal of VDOT’s Business Plan (the maintenance allocation year-end balance does not exceed $75 million to $100 million annually).