



Strengthening Our Economy Together

“Strategies to Cultivate Growth”

September 2013

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Virginia's Growth Alliance

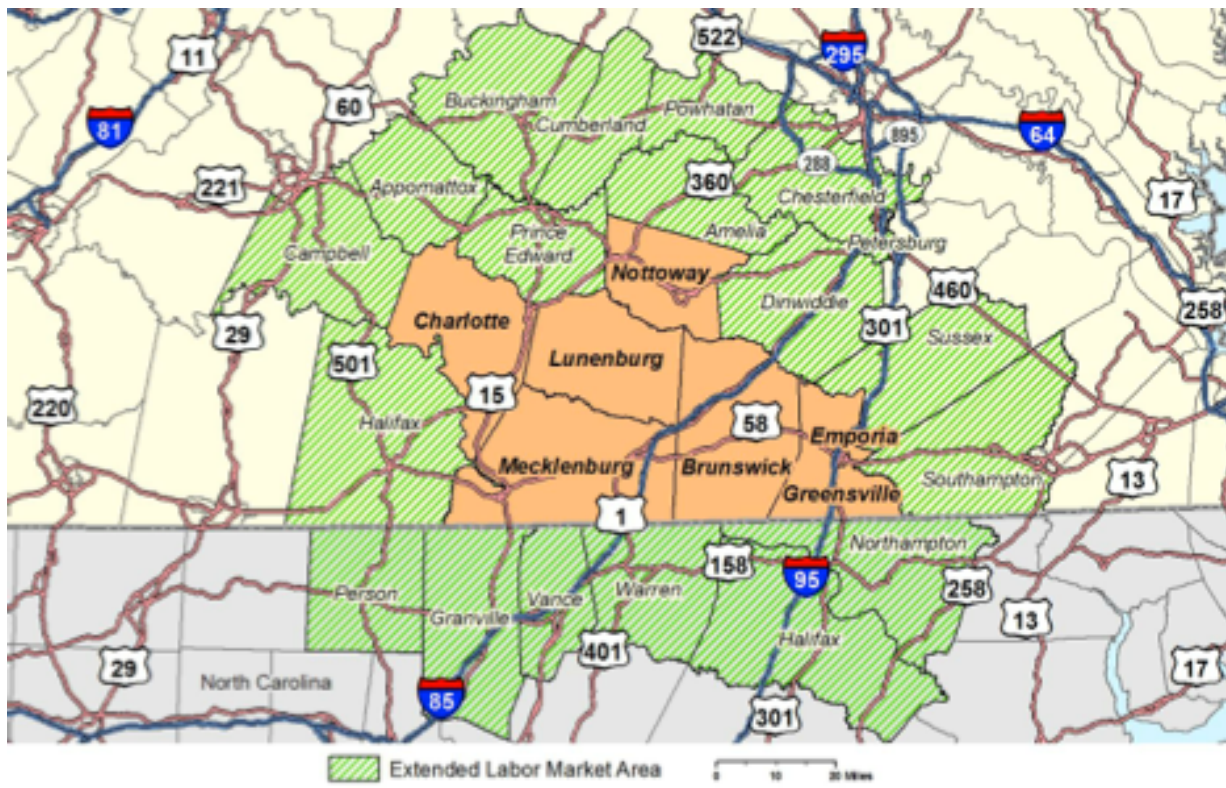
Strengthen Our Economy Together (SET) “Strategies to Cultivate Growth”

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I. Introduction

Virginia's Growth Alliance (VGA) representing six counties and one city (Brunswick, Charlotte, Greensville, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg and Nottoway Counties and the City of Emporia) in southern Virginia along the North Carolina border have recently joined together to create a regional economic development organization. The region's economy continues to lag behind Virginia and the nation and significant additional efforts will be needed in the coming years to reverse this trend. VGA gathered together a broad cross-section of regional stakeholders to help develop this regional strategic plan to help set a course for renewed economic growth.



VGA localities have made strategic investments over the years in its infrastructure and workforce that has positioned the region to achieve greater economic development success in the future but continued investment will need to be made if the region wishes

to build upon this success. Past efforts of the region have been successful in locating major manufacturing and technology companies to the region. The recent location of Microsoft in Mecklenburg County is just one example of the fruits of these investments. This success can be attributed, in-part, to the efforts of a dedicated localities that have had economic development as one of their highest priorities. Building upon these successes the region will need to ratchet up its economic development efforts to be competitive in the global marketplace. It is not sufficient to sit back and wait for businesses to come knocking on your door. With over 15,000 economic development organizations in the US competing for business expansions a region must be proactive, prepared and highly competitive in all aspects of economic development if it is to be successful from business recruitment. To helping to create new businesses to helping existing business expand. This will mean future investments by the region in offering a quality workforce, insuring a modest-cost and supportive business environment and a suitable, quality, locations (sites and buildings) for business to flourish.



The region's economy based upon a strong service sector fueled by small and emerging businesses. The region has historically grown entrepreneurs related to its agricultural roots. These entrepreneurial underpinnings need to be directed to the opportunities of our modern economy. The region needs to expand its economic development programs directed at strong tourism and small business initiatives.



If VGA is to be a rural leader in economic development it must provide the quality product (buildings, sites and infrastructure) that today's businesses are looking for. The region offers a wide variety of business properties from "shovel ready" industrial sites to small retail space in attractive downtowns.

While having a quality real estate is essential to be considered a preferred business location a quality workforce is equally important. The region has made significant investment in workforce training facilities and the Southside Virginia Community College provides a wide variety of course offerings

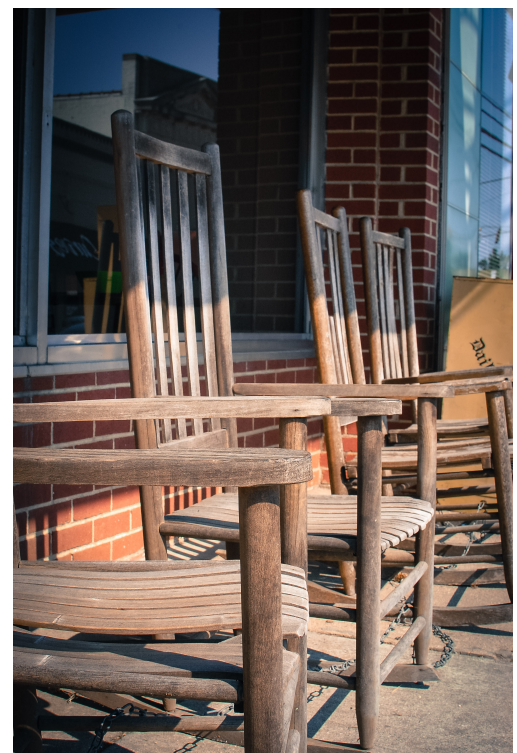
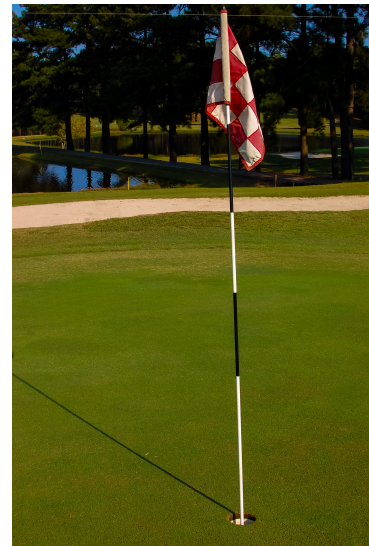
from welding to nursing to precision machine operators. These efforts need to be expanded to include training that starts in our primary and secondary school systems and extends throughout adulthood.



VGA is not an island but is a part of the greater southern Virginia and northern North Carolina region with its distinct characteristics. Today's businesses do not understand or appreciate individual political boundaries. They are interested in the characteristics of the greater region that will meet their needs. This is why it is so very important to think regionally and to position the economic development programs based upon not only an individual community's assets but also those of the larger region. The amenities and resources of near-by metropolitan areas are at your doorstep. Business recruitment and tourism marketing functions are particularly enhanced and more effective when carried out through regional cooperation and collaboration.

Today's younger businessmen and professionals care deeply about the quality of life that an area offers. It is not just about the "job" but the "community", quality of the schools, shopping opportunities, good places to eat and hang out, recreation and cultural outlets, access to high-speed internet service at home and in public spaces, quality and affordable housing options and the list goes on. For the VGA region to be competitive and attractive to these younger decision makers, it must demonstrate quality in all aspects of community and private life.





II. Executive Summary

The VGA region embarked on a process using the Stronger Economies Together model of engaging a broad cross-section of stakeholders (see listing in Appendix A) over 10 months to develop this strategic plan. This planning process recommends a new and invigorated economic development program that will build upon the economic development successes of the past and provide greater prosperity in the future. As the old saying goes “If you don’t know where you’re going any road will get you there”. This plan establishes a renewed vision of a prosperous future and establishes the road map to achieve that vision. The devoted stakeholder group met four hours monthly for 8 months from November 2012 to May 2013 to develop Strategies for Cultivating Growth. This report summarizes the work of this stakeholder group.

This Strategic Economic Development Plan integrates the combined thinking of the stakeholder group, the recommendations of the local economic development professionals and the staffs of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, USDA Rural Development, VA Tech and the Virginia Tourism Corporation. The Strategic Plan outlines a series of strategies that, when implemented, will create a bustling, vibrant and prosperous economy.

Vision

Virginia’s Growth Alliance is a region that nurtures innovation and entrepreneurship; promotes a diverse, integrated economy by cultivating advanced technologies; preserving its natural resources; and celebrating its rural lifestyle, history, and culture.



Goals and Objectives

- I. **Goal:** Attract targeted industries to the region and expand/retain existing regional industries
Objectives:
 - i. Aggressively market the region to target industries and site location consultants
 - ii. Market the region to the suppliers of existing companies for potential expansion

- iii. Provide an inventory of sites and buildings that meet the modern-day requirements of the target industries with the attendant infrastructure
- iv. Train workers in the skills required by the predominant occupations in the target industries (see the workforce development goal)
- v. Provide a favorable/low-cost environment for doing business
- vi. Implement an active existing business and industry assistance program(s)
- vii. Increase support and understanding among the localities for regional economic development collaboration



II. Goal: Create an entrepreneurial atmosphere that cultivates, supports, and expands small businesses

Objectives:

- i. Provide counseling, mentoring, education and training to entrepreneurs and future entrepreneurs
- ii. Create an “entrepreneurship blueprint” of services supporting an entrepreneurial community
- iii. Provide a range of business financing options that support the full range of business needs



III. Goal: Develop a workforce with 21st Century Competencies for our current and future employers

Objectives:

- i. Expand educational curricula to align K-12 programs, post-secondary programs and our workforce development programs to the specific industry competencies projected for the future.
- ii. Develop specialized training for unemployed and low skilled citizens and



incumbent workers

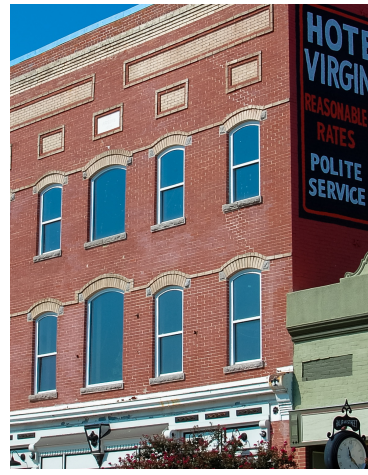
- iii. Market/communicate to all parents and citizens the opportunities that the existing training and education programs offer
- iv. Refine/Improve the “Rapid Response” teams response to “all” industry closings
- v. Improve the communications regarding company workforce needs to education and training providers

IV. Goal: Increase awareness of tourism and quality of life aspects of the region through promotion, education and connectivity while maintaining authenticity

Objectives:

- i. Educate residents, frontline staff, leadership, business management, entrepreneurs and ourselves of the tourism and quality of life assets of our region.
- ii. Actively market the tourism assets to prospective travelers
- iii. Develop research based “markers” for gauging “Return-On-Investment” of tourism in each community
- iv. Develop our small towns as tourism destinations
- v. Develop additional “Tourism Product”, venues, activities, etc.





III. The Strengthening Economies Together (SET) Process

Stronger Economies Together (SET) is a national program of the United States Department of Agriculture. The Southern Rural Development Center, a part of Mississippi State University, coordinates the national program activities. The initiative is designed to help regional, multi-county teams develop new approaches to strengthen and enhance regional economic development activities.

In spring of 2012, Virginia was selected as a state participant. Virginia Cooperative Extension served as the lead entity, coordinating the involvement of a number of federal, state, and local partners in working with two selected regional teams to implement the program. Partners included USDA Rural Development, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, Virginia Tourism Corporation, Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, the Virginia Association of Counties, and others.

Virginia's Growth Alliance (VGA), encompassing the counties of Brunswick, Charlotte, Greensville, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway and the city of Emporia, was one of the two multi-county regions in Virginia selected for the "Stronger Economies Together" (SET) program.

VGA invited area residents and civic leaders to join the SET regional team by participating in the multi-session training process. Participants became part of a regional team that received the latest tools, training, and technical assistance to help the region move forward and take advantage of positive growth and quality of life opportunities.

The process began with a region-wide economic summit in August 2012, and the monthly training sessions began in November 2012. Session locations alternated between South Hill and Keysville, in order to provide equal access to participants from different parts of the area. Sessions included:

November	-	SET introduction; Regional Profile: Building Your Team
December	-	Developing Your Vision and Goals
January	-	Exploring Economic Opportunities
February	-	Strategies for Enhancing the Regional Economy
March	-	Regional Assets and Barriers
April	-	Planning for Success
May	-	Measuring Success

The SET program was an opportunity for the newly formed multi-county team to strengthen their connections, explore ways to work better together, while receiving the latest tools, training, and technical assistance to help their region move forward and take advantage of positive growth and quality of life opportunities.

During the first session, participants identified current assets and activities in four areas, Creation, Attraction, Retention and Expansion (CARES):

VGA CARES Model – This is a compilation of what participants produced.

Creation:

- Workforce centers are being developed
- Regional Alliance formed
- BIT Wireless Broadband
- CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies)
- Virginia's Growth Alliance
- Government incentives (county, state and tobacco commission)
- Ways to support small business and entrepreneurship
- Industrial parks
- United Virginia's Entrepreneurial Program
- Meridian Health Systems – Lunenburg Infrastructure
- Development of a micro-lending program
- FAST C Project - Potential US State Department Training Facility
- Lake Country Development Corporation
- Creative Economy
- Tobacco Heritage Trail/Blueways/Other Tourism Trails
- Virginia's Retreat
- SBDC (Small Business Development Center)



Attraction:

- Workforce centers are being developed

- Regional Alliance formed
- Marketing Missions
- Actively recruiting outside businesses to locate locally
- Promotion of cultural and historical arts
- Regional Mega Site (MAMaC)
- Hwy 58 and I-85
- Community events and facilities
- Teen center & media
- Existing industrial sites
- Tax incentives for businesses
- Outdoor recreation development (trails, farmers markets, canoe/kayak ramps)
- Learning region's site assets
- Site assessments/evaluations (for industrial clients)
- Product development (industrial parks)
- Dominion power – New plant Enterprise Zones
- Chambers of Commerce



Retention:

- South Hill and other's revitalization: efforts to attract and stimulate business growth in the downtown area
- Workforce centers are being developed
- Community college system/ initiatives
- Regional medical care – Radiation and Oncology Regional Alliance formed
- BIT Wireless Broadband



- Advanced manufacturing training
- Longwood Small Business – seminars and classes for entrepreneurs
- Business Retention Activities
- CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies)
- Virginia's Growth Alliance

Expansion:

- Workforce centers are being developed
- Regional Alliance formed
- BIT Wireless Broadband
- CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies)
- Virginia's Growth Alliance
- Buy Fresh/Buy Local Chapter
- Establishment of Regional Industrial Parks
- Produce Auction – charlotte County
- Dominion Power – New Plant
- Next Generation Healthcare



IV. Regional Analysis

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE REGIONAL ECONOMY

The economy of Virginia's Growth Alliance (VGA) is derived and strongly influenced by its geographic position and historical roots. This region, encompassing six counties and a city is located in the southern part of the Commonwealth, south to southwest of Richmond and Petersburg, southeast of Lynchburg, west of Norfolk/Virginia Beach, along the North Carolina border. The region is located in the eastern portion of Virginia's "Southside" region.

VGA is largely rural and forested, consisting of a series of small towns and villages established to serve the area's traditional agricultural base. Soon after it was settled, the region became one of the state and nation's premier sites for the cultivation of tobacco. This activity, along with forestry based on the region's ample supply of wood, largely varieties of pine, served as the economy's backbone for many decades. The initial core economy expanded to include related activities, including tobacco warehousing and trade as well as sawmills and wood production, which in turn stimulated the growth and livelihood of numerous towns within the region. Regional railroads provided economic opportunities to other towns.



The fortune of this once thriving region was turned by the continuous decline in the tobacco economy. Some labor exited agriculture and was absorbed into local plants that drew on the area's natural resources or manufactured apparel and furniture, but even these latter sectors declined as companies failed, went further south or offshore.

Similar to other rural areas throughout the country, this region has been facing the challenge of engineering a transition to new forms of productive economic activities. However, unlike many other rural areas, which experienced significant outmigration due to structural declines in traditional industries, VGA has proven more resilient. To be sure, the region lives with unemployment rates that are typically 3-4 percent higher than the state average. Nevertheless, due to growth in a diverse set of activities ranging from transportation and hospitality to government services and advanced

manufacturing, along with outward “commuting,” the region has retained a level population base.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION OF THE REGION

VGA is rural in character, consisting of small towns that previously served as agricultural centers, surrounded by farmland and forests. Accordingly, the region faces all the opportunities and challenges associated with a rural community in transition. On the one hand, the region does not offer the urban scale and amenities that typically draw certain types of businesses and professionals. At the same time, the region supports a lifestyle that is “family friendly” and provides the small town atmosphere that is attractive to many.

The region’s total population of 110,000 is dispersed throughout a wide geographical region, and most towns have a population size of 5,000 or less. The population is racially mixed. While the proportions vary by county, about 50 percent of the regional population is white and about 46 percent is African American. The majority of the remaining 4 percent are Hispanic.

Wages and incomes are generally lower than the averages for the state. However, these are offset to a certain degree by lower living costs, and the lower wage levels translate into lower labor costs for businesses and investors.



Many of the towns in the region have experienced an evolution similar to that witnessed by rural communities throughout the nation. Several decades ago these towns were important centers of commerce, trade and culture for their surrounding areas. Businesses provided a variety of agricultural support services, such as tobacco warehousing and processing, farm equipment and supplies, construction services, and consumer goods and services. As the agricultural sector eroded, particularly tobacco, demand for these activities declined, leading to business closures or downsizing. At the same time, commercial malls and amenities grew outside traditional downtowns at nearby road intersections, leaving more

empty stores in downtown areas. In recent years, a number of towns have made efforts to “revitalize” themselves, adding restaurants, antique and craft shops, community services and other modern activities to serve residents and tourists alike.

ECONOMIC/INVESTMENT CLIMATE “BALANCE SHEET”

Regions depend on their basic economic “balance sheet” – the assets and challenges they possess – to shape and drive their economic development and standards of living. These assets and challenges refer to the strengths and weaknesses in economic foundations that either nurture or deter businesses and investments. The key categories of economic foundations include natural resources, human resources, technology, capital and finance, infrastructure and quality of life.

A strong economic development program is built upon a foundation of the community assets that can be leveraged to achieve lofty community goals. The positive attributes of a community can be the springboard for other positive results in the community - “success breeds success”. Here is a partial listing of assets from which the VGA region can build a stronger economy.

Natural Resources The VGA region has two main natural resource strengths. The first is fertile agricultural land, supported by rich soil and plentiful rain. Water is readily available. The second is extensive forest resources that provide ample supplies for a variety of wood products. The region is not richly endowed with mineral resources, but has a number of stone quarries and deposits of titanium and of clay suitable for brick production.



Human Resources The region’s human resource situation presents a mixed picture of strengths and weaknesses. On the positive side, the region offers a considerable number of workers who are available at competitive wage rates, hard working, and skilled in traditional activities (e.g., forestry, wood product manufacturing, agriculture, etc.). Unemployment rates in the region varied from 7.5 percent to 10.6 percent in July 2013, averaging 9.4 percent for the region as a whole, compared to a 5.8 percent average for the Commonwealth.

The civilian workforce sizes of individual counties ranged from 5,500 to 14,000. Since most of these people are already employed, and the skill levels of those who are unemployed or underemployed vary significantly, this indicates that individual counties

face a serious disadvantage in efforts to attract many businesses if they focus solely on a county-level workforce. The region's overall population of 110,000 generated a total civilian workforce of 45,800, offering a much better economy of scale in the labor pool. Development practitioners in the region generally do not seek large-scale investments, but rather medium scale businesses with 25-50 workers for reasons of both feasibility and the avoidance of vulnerability to closure that has occurred in many larger mill towns.

Occupational skills training is available at numerous sites operated by Southside Virginia Community College, which is flexible in meeting the needs of local business and industry. While the workforce is not concentrated but rather distributed widely throughout the region, workers are willing to travel some distances to their jobs, as indicated by the following table.



Table 1 Regional Commuting Patterns: Job-Related Out-Commuting and In-Commuting

County	Percentage of In-Commuters	Percentage of Out-Commuters
Brunswick	18.1%	41.1%
Charlotte	17.8%	42.8%
Greensville/Emporia	37.1%	13.3%
Lunenburg	11.2%	46.7%
Mecklenburg	21.8%	18.2%
Nottoway	26.5%	28.1%

The table shows that the more rural counties have a greater percentage of workers who travel outside their home counties to work (either to other counties in the region or outside the region) than the percentages that travel into the county to work.

A major weakness in human resources is the out-migration of youth, who travel outside the region to obtain a college education and tend not to return. In addition, a certain number of unemployed or underemployed workers, including a portion of older workers laid off from well-paying jobs, show little interest in retraining or taking lesser-paying positions. The older age groups have a greater tendency to have little or no knowledge of or interest in computers, and have a very limited amount of understanding of global issues. Another weakness associated with commuting patterns, as indicated by some

stakeholders, is the fact that large numbers of professionals or managers in local businesses commute in from outside the region – from Petersburg, Richmond, Raleigh or other urban areas, presumably because they or their families prefer to live in areas with more urban life and amenities. This pattern reduces the number of affluent families/consumers in the region, and may limit the stake in and level of commitment of professionals and managers to the culture and long-term development of the community.

Technology As an area traditionally geared toward agriculture and forestry, the region is not known as a center for advanced technology. There is no major research university, and the educational and support system for technology activities does not compare to some other regions in Virginia. Over time, some traditional industries (e.g., wood product manufacturing, marble top production, metal fabrication, etc.) have developed strong technological capabilities.

In general, the region relies on investors to bring in and utilize new technologies. In that regard, a number of highly advanced technologies have been introduced in activities such as wood pellets production, sawmill operations, plastic extrusion, etc. The availability of broadband and recent attraction of a state-of-the-art Microsoft, and HP data centers provide the platform to pursue more opportunities in the area of information technology.

Capital and Finance The availability of capital and financing is not seen as either a major strength or weakness in the region. Most economic developers are looking for incoming investors to bring in their own financing. At the same time, some stakeholders note that local entrepreneurs and especially start-ups are constrained by the conservative lending practices of local banks.

Infrastructure As a region, VGA benefits from a well-developed transportation infrastructure. Interstate Route 95, the major U.S. east coast highway, passes through the eastern part of the region, and Interstate Route 85 traverses the center of the region. U.S. Route 58 moves from east to west through the region in the south, and U.S. Routes 15, 360 and 460 serve the western and northern counties. The region is only within a day's ride to reach over half of



the U.S. population centers.

The region also boasts a host of well-maintained state highways that link the region's towns and counties. Traffic and congestion is nonexistent, reducing travel times and frustration, a condition that plagues more populated areas. Development professionals correctly note that road travel is better presented in terms of time rather than in distance. You can actually travel 60 mile in 60 minutes.

The region enjoys considerable access to rail transportation. CSX Railroad runs north and south, and Norfolk Southern Railroad runs east and west. A number of general aviation airports are located in the region. VGA is positioned between the Raleigh-Durham International Airport to the South and the Richmond International Airport to the North and the Norfolk International Airport to the East. The entire region has access to high-speed



broadband infrastructure, which is available through the Mid-Atlantic Broadband Cooperative. However, this strength is offset to some degree by limited access for small businesses due to the high cost of “last mile” connectivity, as noted by development practitioners.

Quality of Life The region offers a highly attractive quality of life for those who are family oriented and who want to enjoy the outdoors while avoiding the stresses, strains and congestion found in urban areas. Land is plentiful and housing is relatively inexpensive, along with many other costs of living. There is ample open land and clean air. The region boasts many venues and opportunities for outdoor activities (camping, hunting and fishing, hiking, etc.). The pace of life is moderate, and traffic and congestion are almost nonexistent. Towns and villages offer a friendly atmosphere. This type of lifestyle is very appealing to certain individuals and families.



On the other hand, the region lacks many of the facilities and amenities generally available in larger urban areas. These include diverse shopping outlets, a wide offering of restaurants, museums, entertainment facilities, concerts and services typical of cities. Simply stated, many younger knowledge workers prefer city life and what it offers, and are not likely to be attracted to the region. However, local development practitioners note that shopping and entertainment can be found in nearby cities in Virginia (Petersburg, Richmond, Lynchburg) and northern North Carolina (Roanoke Rapids). In addition, while the region's lifestyle may not appeal to some young people, it can be attractive for those with families and small children. The table below summarizes the relative strengths and weaknesses of the region's economic foundations.

Table 2 Strengths and Weaknesses – VGA Regional Foundations

Foundation Element	Strengths	Weaknesses
Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land/climate for agriculture • Forest resources • Availability of water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited mineral deposits
Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available, low cost labor • Experience in agriculture, forestry and wood product manufacturing • Low unionization rate • Community college 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited pool of labor in higher skills areas • Brain drain • Culture that does not place a premium on education • Work ethic among certain groups
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High speed internet through broadband 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative internal image • No major research university • Lack of locally developed technology • Expensive "last mile" connectivity to broadband backbone
Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tobacco Commission funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited private sector capital
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road and rail networks • High speed broadband access • Industrial parks, shovel-ready sites, shell buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No major airport
Quality of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low cost of living • Healthy small town/rural environment • Regional hospitals • Ample recreation opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance from major metropolitan areas; lack of urban life • Distance from shopping

KEY ECONOMIC ASSETS IN VIRGINIA'S GROWTH ALLIANCE

Virginia's Growth Alliance possesses a number of economic assets that can be developed further as sources of comparative/competitive advantage, and used as points

or attraction with prospective investors. This list of assets should also provide inferences into the identification of target industries.

- **Geographic position and transportation infrastructure.** VGA does offer a highly attractive, central geographic position, midway on the U.S. eastern seaboard and proximate to a large share of the nation's population and industrial activity. In addition, the region as a whole possesses strong north-south and east-west road and rail infrastructure. This position and transportation access provides opportunities for supply chain, transportation and logistics ventures.
- **Forestry resources.** Each county possesses rich forestry resources consisting of both softwood (pine) and hardwood varieties, as attested to by the significant number of harvesting, sawmill and wood product operations in the region. Wood is a renewable resource that faces strong long-term growth prospects for many uses, ranging from fuel to finished wood products.



- **Agricultural resources.** The heyday of tobacco is over, and the family farm nationwide faces continuing challenges to sustain marketable production and incomes. Nevertheless, agriculture can and probably will evolve to introduce viable crops and income-generating activities. Some of the region's farms have diversified in recent years, and may experience new opportunities in areas such as

biofuels, organic products, meats and dairy products, nontraditional vegetables, fruits, wines, etc.

- **Southside Virginia Community College.** SVCC has principal campuses in Keysville (Charlotte County) and Alberta (Brunswick County), and operates satellite sites in Blackstone (Occupational Technology Center), Chase City (Estes



Community Center), Emporia (Southside Virginia Education Center), and South Hill (Lake County Advanced Knowledge Center). Established in 1970, SVCC has about 8,000 students, of which about 63 percent are women. The average age of students is 27, and a majority work and attend college part time. SVCC's programs of study include associate degree and certificate programs in

arts and science, business technology, engineering and industrial technology, health technology, and public service technology, along with a variety of career studies certificates covering specific career skill sets.

SVCC offers quality educational programs that prepare students for transfer to four-year colleges and universities, as well as an occupational-technical program to educate, train and re-train workers for regional business and industry. Workforce development activities include:

- Courses to pursue associates' degrees and certificates.
 - Special courses or programs to fit the workforce needs of local/regional industries, businesses or professions, and taught either at the college or at client sites.
 - Various community development seminars and programs.
 - Classes, lectures, exhibits, and art and music festivals to promote the cultural affairs of the community.
- **Relatively Low Costs.** Low costs are not what one would normally call an economic asset, but they do represent a potential source of competitive advantage for the region. Labor and land costs in VGA may not be lower than those in rural regions to the south, but they are certainly below those in most urban regions on the east coast. It would be potentially valuable for stakeholders to prepare a reasonably comprehensive, comparative cost analysis as a means to provide meaningful promotional material.



V. Vision, Goals, Objectives and Strategies

The following vision statement is provided to describe the desired economic conditions of Virginia's Growth Alliance. The vision statement is a written description of those economic characteristics that the region should strive to achieve. While not a complete graphic illustration of the region's future it is illustrative of the type of economic activity that is desired.

Vision

Virginia's Growth Alliance is a region that nurtures innovation and entrepreneurship; promotes a diverse, integrated economy by cultivating advanced technologies; preserving its natural resources; and celebrating its rural lifestyle, history, and culture.



The following set of goals has been developed to provide a way to achieve the vision of Virginia's Growth Alliance outlined in the previous section. These goals are the desired outcomes/results needed to fulfill the vision and establish the direction for the economic development efforts for the region.

Goals

- I. Attract targeted industries to the region and expand/retain existing regional industries**
- II. Create an atmosphere that will cultivate, support, and expand small business development**
- III. Develop a workforce with 21st Century Competencies for our current and future employers**
- IV. Increase awareness of tourism and quality of life aspects of the region through promotion, education and connectivity while maintaining authenticity**

Specific sets of objectives have been established for each goal. Several of the goals/objectives require implementation by organizations outside of the sphere of influence of Virginia's Growth Alliance. VGA will encourage, partner and support those organizations to embrace these objectives and carry out efforts to implement them.

A series of strategies/action items are recommended to implement each objective. Some strategies can often impact several goals/objectives. If the strategies and actions recommended are implemented they will lead to the achievement of the goals and objectives. Again, a number of the strategies require implementation by organizations outside of the sphere of influence of Virginia's Growth Alliance.

I. Goal: Attract targeted industries to the region and expand/retain existing regional industries

Objectives:

- a. **Aggressively market the region to target industries and site location consultants**
 - i. **Develop and implement an outreach marketing plan and annual work program**
 - ii. **Continuously evaluate the marketing efforts and modify the marketing plan accordingly**
- b. **Market the region to the suppliers of existing companies for potential expansion**
 - i. **Determine/identify the supply chain of major industries in the region**
 - ii. **Research the growth companies within those supply chains**
 - iii. **Implement a target marketing campaign to those growth companies**
- c. **Provide an inventory of sites and buildings that meet the modern-day requirements of the target industries with the attendant infrastructure**
 - i. **Research target industry needs and define gaps in regional assets, product, or infrastructure**
 - ii. **Encourage the localities to bring existing buildings, sites and infrastructure up to modern target industry standards**
 - iii. **Encourage localities and private investors to invest in new "product", sites and buildings, for target businesses/industries**
 - iv. **Develop "shovel ready" plans for expansion of infrastructure as**



industry/business requires

- d. Train workers in the skills required by the predominant occupations in the target industries (see the workforce development goal)
- e. Provide a favorable/low-cost environment for doing business
 - i. Maintain the modest-cost business environment throughout the region
 - ii. Develop a regional “Fast Track” policy for expediting land development permits for “significant” business opportunities
 - iii. Coordinate local incentive policies among the localities
 - iv. Create and utilize a regional incentive pools and revenue sharing programs
- f. Implement an active existing business and industry assistance program(s)
 - i. Encourage each locality to implement a coordinated state, regional and local existing business call program
- g. Increase support and understanding among the localities for regional economic development collaboration
 - i. Develop an internal/regional communications plan targeted towards local governmental and business leaders



II. Goal: Create an entrepreneurial atmosphere that cultivates, supports, and expands small businesses

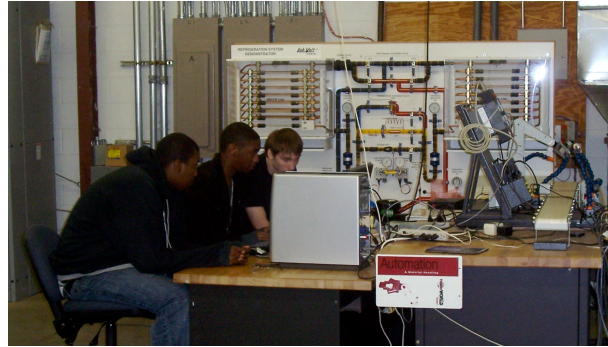
Objectives:

- a. Expand counseling, mentoring, education and training to entrepreneurs and future entrepreneurs
 - i. Inventory existing services and create an online information and referral portal
 - ii. Expand the existing coverage of education and technical assistance resources to blanket the entire VGA region
 - iii. Expand networking options for entrepreneurs
- b. Create an “entrepreneurship blueprint” of services supporting an entrepreneurial community
 - i. Determine the characteristics of an entrepreneurial community through research of other rural entrepreneurship models
 - ii. Determine gaps in services provided in the region
 - iii. Develop an action plan, “blueprint”, to achieve the characteristics and fill the gaps
- c. Provide a range of business financing options that finance the full range of business types
 - i. Determine the financing gaps for small and emerging businesses
 - ii. Develop a plan for filling those gaps

III. Goal: Develop a workforce with 21st Century Competencies for our current and future employers

Objectives:

- a. **Expand educational curricula to align K-12 programs, post-secondary programs and our workforce development programs to the specific industry competencies projected for the future**
 - i. **Expand current and future training facilities to a consistent higher standard of curriculum and equipment that reflects future industry needs & national certifications**
 - ii. **Link educational and training resources to the needs of the target industries as identified by the economic development professionals and Industry Advisory Groups – 1 Advanced Manufacturing, 2 IT, 3 Wood Products, 4 Dist./Logistics, 5 Healthcare**
 - iii. **Gather current and future needs of existing industries through interviewing of a sampling of industries by a newly created multi-agency “business services team” (Halifax model=Workforce center)**
- b. **Develop specialized training for unemployed and low skilled citizens and incumbent workers**
 - i. **Expand current and future training programs to be consistent with the higher standards of curriculum and equipment reflecting future industry needs & national certifications**
 - ii. **Link educational and training resources to the needs of the target industries as identified by the economic development professional and industry advisory groups – 1 Adv Mfg, 2 IT, 3 Wood Products, 4 Dist/Logistics, 5 Healthcare**
 - iii. **Gather current and future needs of existing industries through interviewing of a sampling of industries by a newly created multi-agency “business service team” (Halifax model = Workforce center)**
- c. **Market/communicate to all parents and citizens the opportunities that the existing training and education programs offer**
 - i. **Establish a communications and marketing campaign directed at middle school and high school students and**



- parents on the advantages of technical and occupational careers
 - ii. Conduct a public relations/media campaign targeted at the general public on the advantages of technical and occupational careers
- d. Refine/Improve the “Rapid Response” teams response to “all” industry closings
 - i. Facilitation of team membership and responsibilities by WIBs
 - ii. Distribution of RR resources to all chambers of commerce and major industries by WIBs
 - iii. Contact regional RR Coordinator for assistance with implementation and data by WIBs
- e. Improve the communications regarding company workforce needs to education and training providers
 - i. Form Industry Advisory Groups by Industry cluster to gather information on company workforce development needs (1 Adv Mfg, 2 IT, 3 Wood Products, 4 Dist/Logistics, 5 Healthcare)
 - ii. Encourage local industries, and small businesses to participate in the Industry Advisory Groups

IV. Goal: Increase awareness of tourism and quality of life aspects of the region through promotion, education and connectivity while maintaining authenticity

Objectives:

- a. Educate residents, frontline staff, leadership, business management, entrepreneurs and ourselves on the tourism and quality of life assets of our region.
 - i. Conduct seminars, classes and information programs
- b. Actively market the tourism assets to prospective travelers
 - i. Develop and implement a regional tourism marketing campaign
 - ii. Encourage each locality to actively market their tourism assets
- c. Develop research based “markers” for gauging Return-On-Investment of tourism in each community
 - i. Develop measurable indicators of tourism activity for use in ROI information
 - ii. Create a local tourism currency to encourage more spending on local goods and services



- d. **Develop our small towns as tourist destinations**
 - i. **Develop Itinerates combining activities to participate in with, places to stay, shop and dine for each community and the region**
 - ii. **Encourage the Towns to undertake downtown revitalization projects within their communities**
 - iii. **Encourage the Towns to actively participate in the Virginia Main Street program**
- e. **Develop additional “Tourism Product”, venues, activities, etc.**
 - i. **Work with local, regional and private entities to create new tourism experiences in the region**



IV. Plan of Action

Goal: Attract targeted industries to the region and expand/retain existing regional industries

Objective: Aggressively market the region to target industries and site location consultants

MEASUREMENT: Prospect leads generated. Site visits by prospects, companies deciding to locate in the region, the announced jobs and investment

Actions / Activities to Accomplish	Cost	Assets / Resources (Funds / People / Organizations / Facilities that will contribute to the strategy)	Key Contact Responsible parties	Timeline	Status
Develop and implement an outreach marketing plan and annual work program		VGA Marketing Committee	VGA Executive Director	2013	Completed and ongoing
Continuously evaluate the marketing efforts and modify the marketing plan accordingly		VGA Marketing Committee, VGA Board, Local governing bodies	VGA Executive Director	2015	

Objective: Market the region to the suppliers of existing companies for potential expansion

MEASUREMENT: New investment – survey new companies, existing company Are you're a partner of a local company? New partnerships with new and existing industry. Retention of existing companies. Inquiries to marketing plan

Actions / Activities to Accomplish	Cost	Assets / Resources (Funds / People / Organizations / Facilities that will contribute to the strategy)	Key Contact Responsible parties	Timeline	Status

Determine/identify the supply chain of major industries in the region		VGA Marketing Committee and consultant	VGA Executive Director and local economic developers	2015	
Research the growth companies within those supply chains		VGA Marketing Committee and 310 Ltd.	VGA Executive Director and local economic developers	2015	
Implement a target marketing campaign to those growth companies		VGA Marketing Committee and 310 Ltd.	VGA Executive Director and local economic developers	2016	

Objective: Provide an inventory of sites and buildings that meet the modern-day requirements of the target industries with the attendant infrastructure

MEASUREMENT: Assets/ Asset development Plan in place in support of strategy.

Actions / Activities to Accomplish	Cost	Assets / Resources (Funds / People / Organizations / Facilities that will contribute to the strategy)	Key Contact Responsible parties	Timeline	Status
Research target industry needs and define gaps in regional assets, product, or infrastructure		VGA Marketing Committee and consultant	VGA Executive Director	2013	Completed
Encourage the localities to bring existing buildings, sites and infrastructure up to modern target industry standards		VGA Marketing Committee and consultant, Local economic development director	Local economic development director	2013	Ongoing

Encourage localities and private investors to invest in new “product”, sites and buildings, for target businesses/ industries		VGA Marketing Committee and consultant, local economic development director	Local economic development director	2013	Ongoing
Develop “shovel ready” plans for expansion of infrastructure as industry/business requires		VGA Marketing Committee and consultant, local economic development director	Local economic development director	2013	Ongoing

Objective: Provide a favorable/low-cost environment for doing business

MEASUREMENT: Adoption/Utilization of the revenue or incentive pool program.
Number of private partners.

Actions / Activities to Accomplish	Cost	Assets / Resources (Funds / People / Organizations / Facilities that will contribute to the strategy)	Key Contact Responsible parties	Timeline	Status
Maintain the modest-cost business environment throughout the region		Local governing bodies, VGA Board	Local governing bodies and County Administrator/ City Manager	Ongoing	Ongoing
Develop a regional “Fast Track” policy for expediting land development permits for “significant” business opportunities		VGA Board, Local governing bodies, Local administrative staffs	VGA Board and Local governing bodies	2013	Completed

Coordinate local incentive policies among the localities		VGA Marketing Committee, VGA Board, Local governing bodies, local economic development directors	VGA Executive Director, local economic development directors and County Administrator s/City Manager	2013	Ongoing
Create and utilize a regional incentive pools and revenue sharing programs		VGA Board, Local governing bodies, local economic development directors	VGA Executive Director and County Administrator s/City Manager	2015	

Objective: Implement an active existing business and industry assistance program(s)

Actions / Activities to Accomplish	Cost	Assets / Resources (Funds / People / Organizations / Facilities that will contribute to the strategy)	Key Contact Responsible parties	Timeline	Status
Encourage each locality to implement a coordinated state, regional and local existing business call program		Local economic development directors, state business development organizations	Local economic development directors	2014	

Objective: Increase support and understanding among the localities for regional economic development collaboration

MEASUREMENT: Continued support for VGA, financially and time invested. Increased awareness of VGA and increased communication and collaboration within the region

Actions / Activities to Accomplish	Cost	Assets / Resources (Funds / People / Organizations / Facilities that will contribute to the strategy)	Key Contact Responsible parties	Timeline	Status
Develop an internal/ regional communications plan targeted towards local governmental and business leaders		VGA Executive Director, VGA Board and marketing committee, SET participants, Chambers of Commerce	VGA Executive Director	2013	To be initiated in the fall of 2013

Goal: Create an entrepreneurial atmosphere that cultivates, supports, and expands small businesses

Committee Vision: *To have an entrepreneurial ecosystem that will cultivate, support, and expand small business development.*

Objective: Expand counseling, mentoring, education and training to entrepreneurs and future entrepreneurs

Strategies:

- 1 - Inventory existing services and create an online information and referral portal
 - 2 - Expand the existing coverage of education and technical assistance resources to blanket the entire VGA region
 - 3 - Expand networking options for entrepreneurs
-

Actions / Activities to Accomplish	Cost	Assets / Resources (Funds / People / Organizations / Facilities that will contribute to the strategy)	Key Contact Responsible parties	Timeline	Status
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Inventory existing services and asses gaps. Review Longwood SBDC Report			SET Entrepreneurs hip Committee	August 2013 Complete Resource List	
Develop Communication Plan Communicate to the Community about assets available in the community to support small business development Review the Longwood SBDC Report, Assembly what is available now, Research Advantage West (Cassandra)		Banks, Longwood SBDC, chambers of commerce, civic clubs, school systems, teen clubs, YMCA's, Southside Virginia Community College Longwood will provide some assistance also through marketing and pr interns	SET Entrepreneurs hip Committee	Sept. 2014	
VGA to apply for CDBG Innovation Loan to continue training and create revolving loan fund.		VGA Executive Director, VGA Board, Longwood SBDC, SSPDC, UV, Banks	SET Entrepreneurs hip Committee	October 2013	

Measures:

Number of people completed training
 Number of people receiving technical assistance
 Number of business plans completed
 Number of businesses receiving funding
 Number of businesses created, expanded, etc...
 Marketing materials throughout the region education about what is available
 Awarded a CDBG Innovation Grant
 Creation of Loan Pool

Objective: Create an “entrepreneurship blueprint” of services supporting an entrepreneurial community

Strategies:

- 1 - Determine the characteristics of an entrepreneurial community through research of other rural entrepreneurship models**
- 2 - Determine gaps in services provided in the region**
- 3 - Develop and action plan, “blueprint”, to achieve the characteristics and fill the gaps**

Actions / Activities to Accomplish	Cost	Assets / Resources (Funds / People / Organizations / Facilities that will contribute to the strategy)	Key Contact Responsible parties	Completion Timeline	Status

Determine the characteristics of an entrepreneurial community		Research from other communities, gap assessment results, input from stakeholders	Cassandra coordinating collection of information	August 2013	
Determine plan of action for creating the blueprint to achieve the characteristics				January 2014	
Complete plan		SBDC contracted		November 2014	

Measures of Success

Completed blueprint document

Additional partners for the effort

Objective: Provide a range of business financing options that finance the full range of business types

Strategies:

1 - Determine the financing gaps for small and emerging businesses

2 - Develop a plan for filling those gaps

Actions / Activities to Accomplish	Cost	Assets / Resources (Funds / People / Organizations / Facilities that will contribute to the strategy)	Key Contact Responsible parties	Completion Timeline	Status
Determine the sources of available financing and determine gaps		Research from other communities, gap assessment results, input from stakeholders	VGA staff, Longwood SBDC, Lake Country Development Corporation	December 2013	
Determine plan of action for filling financing gaps		VGA staff, Longwood SBDC, Lake Country Development Corporation	VGA Staff	February 2014	

Complete plan		VGA staff, Longwood SBDC, Lake Country Development Corporation	VGA Staff	March 2014	
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Goal: Develop a workforce with 21st Century Competencies for our current and future employers

Objectives:

- 1) Expand educational curricula to align K-12 programs, post-secondary programs and our workforce development programs to the specific industry competencies projected for the future.**

Measures:

- a) Documented 21st Century Competencies imbedded in the curricula
- b) Increase in students in STEM & CTE programs
- c) Track local hiring of students that have completed education/training programs
- d) Employer satisfaction surveys of local workers hired

Strategies:

- a) Expand current and future training facilities to a consistent higher standard of curriculum and equipment that reflects future industry needs & national certifications
- b) Link educational and training resources to the needs of the target industries as identified by the economic development professional and Industry Advisory Groups – 1 Adv.Mfg, 2 IT, 3 Wood Products, 4 Dist./Logistics, 5 Healthcare
- c) Gather current and future needs of existing industries through interviewing of a sampling of industries by a newly created multi-agency “business services team” (Halifax model - Workforce center)

- 2) Develop specialized training for unemployed and low skilled citizens and incumbent workers**

Measures:

- a) Increased participation in training programs
- b) Retention of employees that have participated in the training programs

Strategies:

- a) Expand current and future training programs to be consistent

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Actions / Activities to Accomplish	Cost	Assets / Resources (Funds / People / Organizations / Facilities that will contribute to the strategy)	Key Contact Responsible parties	Timeline	Status
Identify growth occupations		VGA Staff, WIB Staff, SVCC, Consultant, School Superintendents	VGA Staff,	Spring 2014	
Identify existing programs and facilities preparing students from the growth occupations		VGA Staff, WIB Staff, SVCC, Consultant, School Superintendents	VGA Staff	Summer 2014	
Designate the existing training facilities as "Career Centers for Specialized Occupational Training"		SVCC, TIC, VGA Board	SVCC	Fall 2014	
Implement inter-divisional agreements for student participation/funding		SVCC, School Superintendents	SVCC	Spring 2014	
Implementation inter-agency agreements for post-secondary and incumbent worker training & dislocated workers		WIB, SVCC	WIB	Summer 2014	
Implementation of "Dream It... Do It" Academy regionally		SVCC, WIB, School Superintendents	SVCC	Summer 2104	
Implement the "career scope" assessment for all students and adults wishing to change their career		WIB, SVCC	WIB	Fall 2014	

Establish a “skills certification” process for veterans that converts and certifies their military skills training to nationally recognized standards Of achievement in various trades		WIB, SVCC	WIB	Fall 2014	
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Goal: Increase awareness of tourism and quality of life aspects of the region through promotion, education and connectivity while maintaining authenticity

Objective: To educate Residents, Frontline Staff, Leadership, Business Management, Entrepreneurs and ourselves of the assets in Tourism and Quality of Life of our region.

Measurement: determine existing level of knowledge of the assets in Tourism and Quality of Life of our region

Conditions - Long Term Outcome(s): Community that is welcoming and informative to our tourism guests and new residents to the region.

Strategy: Conduct seminars, classes and informative programs

Measurement: The number of attendees who attend seminars, classes and programs and post test attendees to determine the increase in knowledge

Behavior – Intermediate Outcome(s): improved soft skills, courtesy, hospitality

Attitudes, Knowledge, Skills - Short Term Outcome(s): a more active interest in these assets of the community and, confidence and knowledge of the area assets they didn't have

Actions / Activities to Accomplish	Cost	Assets / Resources (Funds / People / Organizations / Facilities that will contribute to the strategy)	Key Contact Responsible parties	Timeline	Status
Seminars for businesses		SVCC, Chambers, Virginia's Retreat, State Agency resources,	VGA/Virginia's Retreat	2014	
Seminars for the elected leaders regarding the economic impact of tourism		Virginia's Retreat, VGA SVCC, Local Tourism Directors	Virginia's Retreat	Winter 2014	
Classes for frontline staff -		Virginia's Retreat, VTC SVCC, Local Tourism Directors, Chambers of Commerce	Virginia's Retreat	2016	
Conduct programs at local community organizations; ie rotary		Virginia's Retreat, Local Tourism Directors, VTC	Virginia's Retreat, Local Tourism Directors,	ongoing	

Objective: Actively market the tourism assets to prospective travelers

Conditions - Long Term Outcome(s): Making the region a Tourism destination with a broad spectrum of activities that matches tourism customers as well as citizens needs and wants.

Strategies:

- 1 - Develop and implement a regional tourism marketing campaign**
 - 2 - Encourage each locality to actively market their tourism assets**
-

Actions / Activities to Accomplish	Cost	Assets / Resources (Funds / People / Organizations / Facilities that will contribute to the strategy)	Key Contact Responsible parties	Timeline	Status
Inventory of Community and Regional assets		Virginia's Retreat, VTC	VTC	ongoing	
Define who we are as a community and region		Virginia's Retreat, VGA, SVCC, Local Tourism Directors	Virginia's Retreat	Winter 2014	
Launch regional Tourism projects; Create Local Tourism currency		Virginia's Retreat, VTC, Chambers of Commerce, Local Tourism Directors	Virginia's Retreat	2016	

Objective: Develop research based “markers” for gauging Return-On-Investment of tourism in each community

Conditions - Long Term Outcome(s): Make our citizens into Information Gatekeepers for Tourism

Strategies:

- 1 - Develop measurable indicators of tourism activity for use in ROI information**
- 2 - Create a local tourism currency to encourage more spending on local goods and services**

Actions / Activities to Accomplish	Cost	Assets / Resources (Funds / People / Organizations / Facilities that will contribute to the strategy)	Key Contact Responsible parties	Timeline	Status
Educate community on ways to measure Tourist activity		Virginia's Retreat, VGA, VTC, Local Tourism Director's	Virginia's Retreat	Summer 2014	

Conduct Baseline activities in each community		Virginia's Retreat, VTC, Local Tourism Director's	VTC	ongoing	
Develop measurement markers for gathering of data throughout the region		Virginia's Retreat, VTC, Local Tourism Director's	Virginia's Retreat	Summer 2014	

Objective: Development of Small Towns as Tourism destinations

Conditions - Long Term Outcome(s): Welcoming business atmosphere for all types of Entrepreneurial activity that adds to the quality of life for residents and attracts tourists.

Strategies:

- 1 - Develop Itinerates combining activities to participate in with, places to stay, shop and dine for each community and the region**
- 2 - Encourage the Towns to undertake downtown revitalization projects within their communities**
- 3 - Encourage the Towns to actively participate in the Virginia Main Street program**

Actions / Activities to Accomplish	Cost	Assets / Resources (Funds / People / Organizations / Facilities that will contribute to the strategy)	Key Contact Responsible parties	Timeline	Status
Itinerary development-Hub and spoke format		Virginia's Retreat, VTC, Local Tourism Directors, Chambers of Commerce	Local Tourism Directors	Winter 2014	
Market potential Tours-shopping, dining, bus, history, etc.		Virginia's Retreat, VTC, Local Tourism Directors, Chambers of Commerce	Local Tourism Directors	Spring 2014	

Objective: Develop additional “Tourism Product”, venues, activities, etc.

Conditions - Long Term Outcome(s): Making the region a Tourism destination with a broad spectrum of activities that matches our citizens needs and wants and our targeted Tourism customers.

Strategy:

Work with local, regional and private entities to create new tourism experiences in the region

Actions / Activities to Accomplish	Cost	Assets / Resources (Funds / People / Organizations / Facilities that will contribute to the strategy)	Key Contact Responsible parties	Timeline	Status
Inventory of Community and Regional assets		Virginia's Retreat, VTC, DHCD	Virginia's Retreat	ongoing	
Define who we are as a community and region		Virginia's Retreat, VTC, Local Tourism Directors	Virginia's Retreat	Winter 2014	
Launch regional Tourism projects; Create Local Tourism currency		Virginia's Retreat, VTC, Chambers of Commerce, Local tourism Directors	Virginia's Retreat	2016	

Appendix A – SET Participants

Name	Representing
Adams, Susan	Charlotte County
Arnold, Tommy	RT Arnold Library
Bagley, Michael	
Barber, Neal	Community Futures
*Bender, Courtney	Benchmark
Burnette, Scott	Community Memorial Healthcenter
Calhoun, Brian	Virginia Cooperative Extension
Calhoun, Lonnie	Intercultural Professionals
Callis, Kim	Town of South Hill
Canada, Star	DHCD
Chambers, Cynthia	Virginia Employment Commision
Cicala, Marianne	Twigs & Berries
Clarke, Christopher	Clarksville Council
Clary, Lisa	Mecklenburg Sun
Coleman, Beverley	DHCD
Conner, Bobby	Town Council
Coronas, Natalie	SVCC
*Cox, Denise	VEC
Creedle, Steve	Benchmark
Crowder, Debra	SCWIB
Dalton, Dixie	SVCC
*Davis, Carolyn	Access Realty
De Stefano, Frank	De Stefano Architectural Group
Dean, CJ	Town of Lawrenceville
Dickens, Lafayette	Town of Blackstone
Dietrich Hall, Vellie	Vellie's Boutique
Dodd-Slippy, Martha	VCELC
Eastwood, Patricia	DCR
*Elkins, Mary	SVCC
Eubanks, Roscoe	Town Manager of Drakes Branch
*Espy, Carl	Town of Halifax
Feggins, Patricia	Patricia's Childcare Center
Foster, Megan	Virginia's Growth Alliance
Foster, Melody	Virginia's Heartland
Fowler, Robyn	SPDC
*Garnett, Doug	
*Gee, Tracy	Lunenburg County Administrator
Gill, Natasha	Benchmark

Gosney, Deborah	SPDC
Hackney, Melody	Charlotte County Public Schools
*Hagy, Andy	The Hagy Group
Harrell, Jan	Town of Emporia
Harris, Larry	Longwood University
Hasbrouck, Christine	Grey Swan Inn Bed & Breakfast
Hawthorne, Beverly	Lunenburg County
Herring, Anne	USDA/Rural Development
Jackson, Christin	WIA
*Jones, Kermit	Charlotte Courthouse
Jackson, Doug	DHCD
Jones, Michelle	DHCD
Jordan, Lisa	Colonial Center
Kellett, Angie	Mecklenburg County
Kerr, Marcia	Remax
Kimball, Alton	Bracey Rest Area
*Kinker, Sandra	Harper's Jewelry
*Kyte, Susan	Mecklenburg Sun
Layne, Sharon	Town of Keysville
Robert Lewis	United Virginia
Lingren, Dan	Hewlett Packard
*Loftus, Thomas	East West Technologies
Mannning, Leah	WPPDC
*Manning, Tammy	First Citizens Bank
McGuire, Sheri	Longwood University
Moody, Gail	SPDC
Moody, Mike	South Hill Town Council
Morton, Jerri	100 Mile Yard Sale
Mosier, Brian	Mecklenburg County
Nowery, Caroline	Virginia Community Capital, Inc.
Pack, Catherine	VEDP
Papierniak, Almira	Lake Gaston Chamber of Commerce
*Patterson, Ken	Town of Victoria
Pennington, Edward	Lunenburg County
Peerman, Joanne	DHCD
*Ragland, Ann	VSU
Ramsey, Diana	MacCallum More Museum & Gardens
Randolph, Tom	Randolph Film & Photography
*Ridgeway, Jenny	Bank of Charlotte County
Roberts, Al	SVCC
Roberts, Kimberly	Penmac
Robertson, Beth	Benchmark
*Rogers, Zoe	VA State Parks

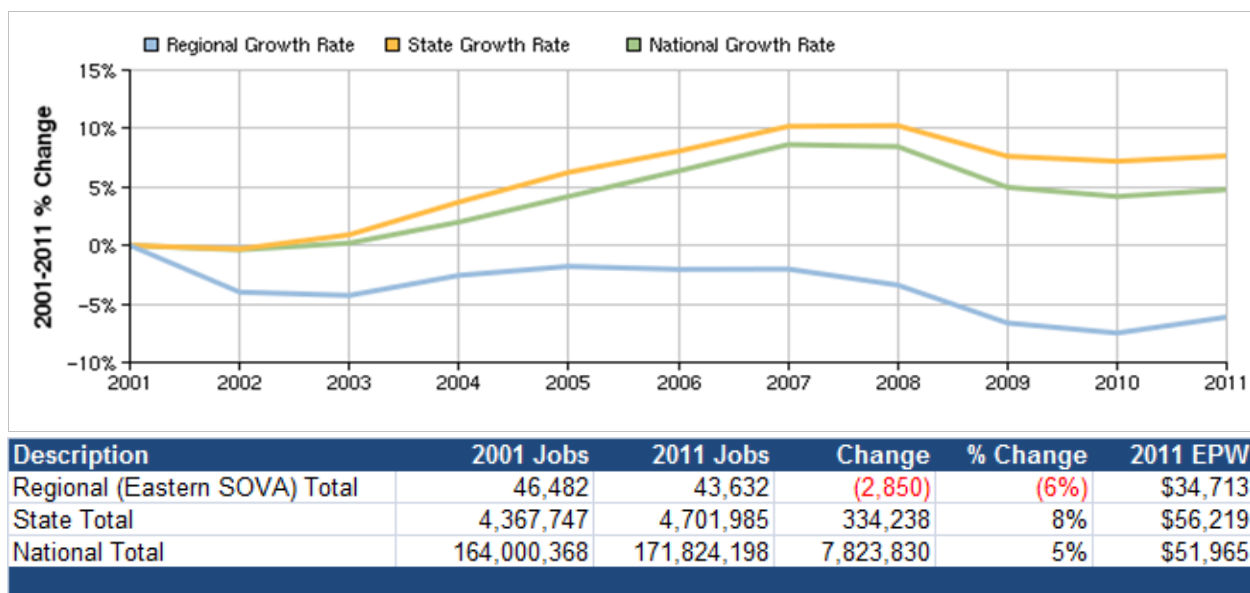
Ruff, Frank	VA State Senator
Rutledge, Braxton	Chase City Chamber of Commerce
Shanaberger, Gary	Longwood University
*Sheffield, Linda	SVCC
Sheldon, Josh	United Virginia
Sims, Mickey	BIT Communications
Slate, Natalie	Greensville, Economic Developer
Smiley, Debra	SVCC
Smith, Cassandra	United Virginia
Smith, Dennis	SVCC
Smith, Sherri	Artisans Center of Virginia
Somerville, Kristy	MCPS
Susee, Heather	VTC/SPDC
Swinson, Sherry	Virginia's Growth Alliance
Tanner, Sandra	Virginia Tourism Corporation
*Taylor, Baretta	South Hill Enterprise
Tate, Scott	Virginia Tech
*Temple, Dale	Emporia Town Council
*Thrower, Brian	City of Emporia
*Towne, Sandra	Properties of Virginia
Walker, Martha	VEC
Williams, Vittoria	Bluebird Coffee Shop
Wilson, Carol	United Virginia
Wright, Wendy	Brunswick County
Woolridge, Charlette	Brunswick County
Zincone, Tommy	Friends of RT Arnold Library

*Indicates those who have not attended SET meetings, but want updates and intend to attend a future meeting.

Appendix B - Regional Industry Analysis

This section presents data on employment, industrial structure, and industry trends over time (2001-2011), and export strength via location quotients, for the VGA regional economy. All data comes from EMSI, which coalesces industry and employment data from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), but also uses modeling and interpolation to offer estimates of self-employed persons and data typically suppressed in public data files.

Figure 1 Comparison of Employment Growth in the VGA Region, Commonwealth of Virginia, and the U.S., 2001-11

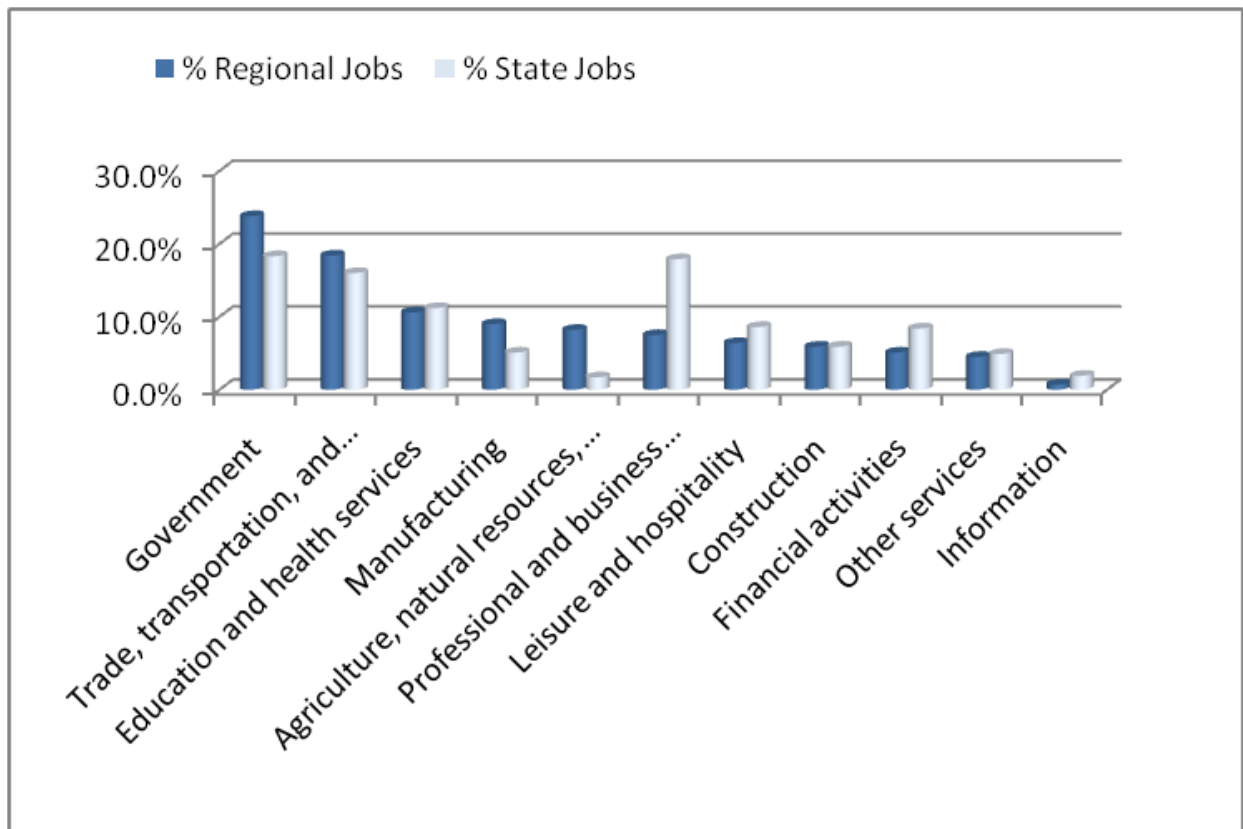


- The figure above benchmarks employment growth in the VGA region over the last 10 years with employment growth in the Commonwealth of Virginia and nationally. Employment in VGA declined by 6 percent over the past 10 years, while overall employment grew by 8 percent in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and by 5 percent for the United States as a whole.
- Business downturns have resulted in employment losses that are greater in VGA than at the state and national level. Similarly, the region has not been able to capitalize on national and global economic expansions to the extent that other parts of the state have. During the most recent economic expansion (2002-07), VGA employment growth was considerably more sluggish than state and national employment growth, indicating that the region was not able to regain jobs lost in the 2001-2002 downturn. Similarly, during the most

recent recession (2007-09) that ended officially in June 2009, the VGA region has only experienced some modest employment growth.

- The 2011 average earnings per worker (EPW) in VGA are much lower than the state and national average EPW: \$34,713 for the Eastern SOVA region compared to \$56,219 at the state level and \$51,965 nationally. The regional average wage was 38.3 percent below the state average and 33.2 percent below the national average.

Figure 2 Industry Overview: Comparison of Industry Composition in VGA and Commonwealth of Virginia, 2010



The figure above shows the industry distribution of jobs in the region and in the Commonwealth.

- The dark blue bars represent the share of VGA employment in each industry, and the light blue bars represent the average share of employment in each industry at the state level.
- The industry profile of the VGA region has some notable differences from the state economy. The region has more employment concentrated in Government; Trade, Transportation, and Utilities; Manufacturing; and Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Mining than the state in these industries.

- The VGA region has much lower employment in Professional and Business Services and Financial Activities than the average number of people employed in these jobs at the state level.
- Also, less prominent compared to the state average is VGA employment in Education and Health Services; Leisure and Hospitality; and Information.

Table 3 Employment Growth by Major Industry Sector in the VGA Region, 2001-11

NAICS Code	Description	2001 Jobs	2011 Jobs	Change	% Change per Year	2011 EPW	2010 Establishments
90	Government	9,890	10,286	396	0%	\$45,518	184
44-45	Retail Trade	4,759	4,307	(452)	(1%)	\$24,246	337
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	2,881	4,127	1,246	4%	\$31,538	319
31-33	Manufacturing	8,369	3,741	(4,628)	(8%)	\$43,011	101
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	4,103	3,229	(874)	(2%)	\$19,932	121
23	Construction	2,729	2,673	(56)	(0%)	\$37,004	266
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	2,383	2,661	278	1%	\$39,210	175
72	Accommodation and Food Services	2,337	2,394	57	0%	\$14,553	142
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	1,869	1,989	120	1%	\$22,668	215
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1,439	1,828	389	2%	\$28,520	82
52	Finance and Insurance	882	1,304	422	4%	\$35,976	106
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	778	1,182	404	4%	\$37,623	130
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	650	981	331	4%	\$15,678	63
42	Wholesale Trade	888	963	75	1%	\$51,037	99
61	Educational Services	700	620	(80)	(1%)	\$24,203	9
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	351	325	(26)	(1%)	\$10,649	22
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	793	320	(473)	(9%)	\$83,460	11
51	Information	336	285	(51)	(2%)	\$43,334	34
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	104	216	112	8%	\$82,360	6
22	Utilities	242	202	(40)	(2%)	\$99,398	9
Total		46,482	43,632	(2,850)	(1%)	\$34,713	2,432

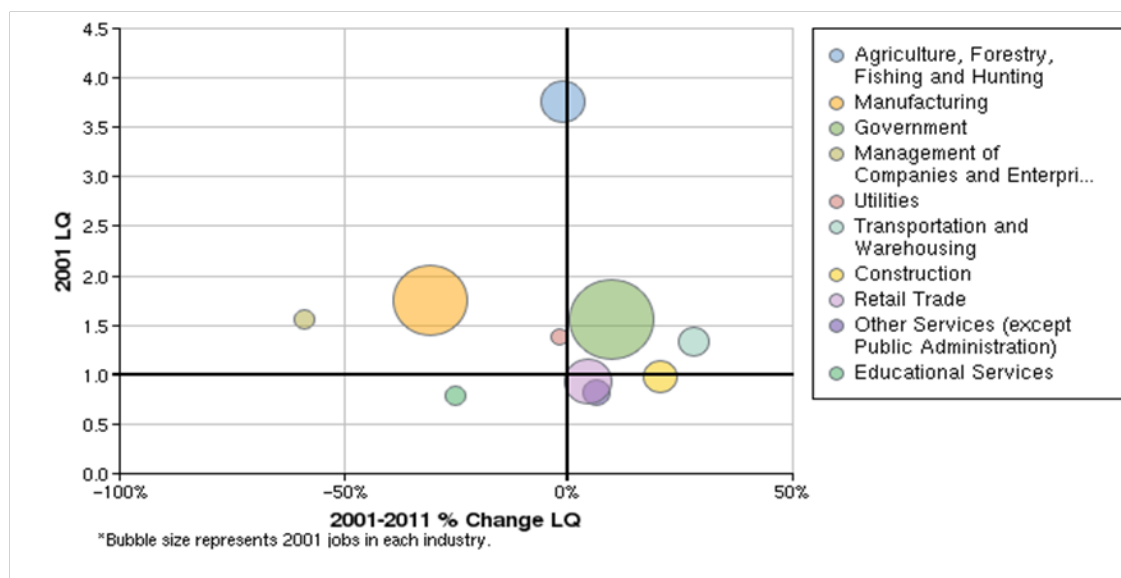
The table above shows the change in employment by major industry sector over the past 10 years (2001-2011). Overall, employment in the VGA region declined by 6 percent over this period, or by 0.6 percent per year.

- The top five sectors in terms of actual number of jobs added were: (1) Health Care and Social Assistance (1,246 net jobs added), (2) Finance and Insurance (422 jobs), (3) Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (404 jobs), (4) Government (396 jobs), and (5) Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services (389 jobs).
- Of these top five sectors, Finance and Insurance; Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; and Government had average earnings per worker (EPW) that were higher than the VGA average EPW of \$34,713.

- Several sectors shed employment over this 10-year period. The top four sectors in terms of largest net loss of jobs include: (1) Manufacturing (4,628 net jobs lost), (2) Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (-874 jobs), (3) Management of Companies and Enterprises (-473 jobs), and (4) Retail Trade (-452 jobs).

The location quotient compares the regional concentration of jobs in an industry to the national average concentration of jobs in that same industry. A location quotient of 1.0 means that the share of employment in an industry regionally is the same as the share of employment in that industry at the national level. A location quotient of 1.25 or higher generally indicates that a region is relatively competitive and is exporting goods and services from that industry, since there are more people employed in that sector than people who could consume all of that good or service locally.

Figure 3 Change in Location Quotient of Major VGA Industry Sectors, 2001-11



- The figure above shows the change in the location quotients of major industry sectors in the VGA economy. Industry sectors in the upper right hand quadrant have a higher concentration of employment relative to the situation at the national level, and employment in this cluster grew at a faster rate than at the national level from 2001-11. Two sectors were located in this quadrant: (1) Government and (2) Transportation and Warehousing.
- Other sectors in which VGA has a high location quotient but in which the concentration of regional jobs declined relative to the situation at the national

level are over the past 10 years include: (1) Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting; (2) Manufacturing; (3) Management of Companies and Enterprises; and (4) Utilities. These are located in the upper left hand quadrant.

- Construction; Retail Trade; and Other Services are located in the lower right hand quadrant. They had a LQ lower than 1.0 in 2001, but experienced modest positive growth over the last 10 years.
- Educational Services had a LQ below 1.0 in 2001 and experienced a decline in employment concentration from 2001-11.
- Several other clusters have very low LQs. This presents both a challenge and an opportunity to the local economy, because some of these sectors with low employment concentrations are important enablers for other sectors of the economy. For example, Finance and Insurance; Information; and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services companies and workforce are key enablers for many other companies in other sectors of the economy.

The location quotients for all the major industry sectors are presented in the table below. One can see that the following sectors are the “mainstays” of the VGA region, and each has a LQ that is higher than the nation as a whole: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting; Manufacturing; Government; and Transportation and Warehousing. Another finding is that the industries with the lowest LQs in the region – those at the bottom of the table, such as Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; Information; Arts, Entertainment and Recreation; and Finance and Insurance – are those typically more prevalent in regions that are more urbanized.

Table 4 Major Industry Sectors in the VG

NAICS Code	Description	2001 Jobs	2001 LQ	2011 LQ	Change
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	4,103	3.76	3.71	(0.05)
31-33	Manufacturing	8,369	1.75	1.21	(0.54)
90	Government	9,890	1.57	1.72	0.15
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	793	1.56	0.64	(0.92)
22	Utilities	242	1.38	1.35	(0.03)
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	2,383	1.33	1.70	0.37
23	Construction	2,729	0.98	1.18	0.20
44-45	Retail Trade	4,759	0.93	0.97	0.04
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	1,869	0.82	0.87	0.05
61	Educational Services	700	0.79	0.59	(0.20)
72	Accommodation and Food Services	2,337	0.77	0.79	0.02
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	2,881	0.67	0.85	0.18
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1,439	0.53	0.70	0.17
42	Wholesale Trade	888	0.50	0.63	0.13
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	104	0.46	0.59	0.13
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	650	0.41	0.52	0.11
52	Finance and Insurance	882	0.40	0.56	0.16
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	351	0.39	0.34	(0.05)
51	Information	336	0.29	0.35	0.06
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	778	0.27	0.39	0.12
Total		46,482	1.00	1.00	

A Region Ranked by Location Quotient, 2001 and 2011

APPENDIX C - TARGET MARKET ASSESSMENT AND POSSIBLE AREAS FOR REGIONAL COLLABORATION

TARGET MARKET ASSESSMENT

Industry targeting has been found to be important among economic developers for purposes of positioning regions among the investment community and carrying out proactive marketing and promotion activities with limited resources. It should not and does not imply that prospects in non-target activities will be disregarded.

In general, the best strategy is for a region to identify a select number (4-6) of industries to pursue on a proactive basis. Prospective investments in other sectors that come in would certainly be welcomed, but scarce marketing resources would be devoted to target industries. It is best to focus on so-called “export industries” – those that would sell their products or services to customers outside the region. While retail stores, doctor’s offices and other service providers may account for a significant share of employment, they are driven by local demand. Similarly, target industry portfolios should include a mix of mature and emerging industry clusters. Mature industries are more established and can account for significant employment opportunities. Emerging industries employ smaller numbers of workers, but they often seed long-term growth and higher wages.

In view of the region’s relatively high unemployment rate, almost any new or expanded investment would be welcomed. In general, regional economic development leaders place highest priority on attracting medium scale enterprises capable of generating employment opportunities. They are cognizant of the challenges posed by the regional labor force in terms of supporting either large scale or high technology industries that require significant numbers of highly skilled workers.

The region’s economic development stakeholders have identified general industry targets for new investment. These generally include forestry/wood products, advanced manufacturing, information technology, and transportation/logistics. In addition to these the industry targets the region recognizes the potential of two strategic assets, the 1500 acre mega-site for a large-scale manufacturing facility in Greenville County, Mid-Atlantic Advanced Manufacturing Center, and the proposed national security training facility at Fort Pickett, FAST-C project.

The following table summarizes our assessment of the relative merits of these target industries. The first three criteria (existing assets to investors, regional competitive position, and current industry base) relate to factors of interest to potential investors. The remaining criteria indicate areas of interest to regional stakeholders. The scoring

ranges from one checkmark (for lowest) to five checkmarks (for highest) for each criterion.

	Forestry, Wood Products	Agri- business	Advanced Manu.	Information Technology	Transportation, Logistics
Existing Assets to Investors	√√√√	√√√	√√	√√	√√√
Regional Competitive Position	√√√	√√	√√	√√	√√√
Current Industry Base	√√√√	√√	√	√	√√
Fit with Region	√√√√	√√√	√√	√√	√√√
Employment Generation Potential	√√√	√√	√√	√√	√√√
Potential to be Transformative	√	√	√√√	√√√√	√√
Overall Potential	√√√√	√√	√√	√√	√√√

This overall “portfolio” of industry targets makes sense, but for different reasons for each industry. In general, given the relatively small number of investments required to contribute materially to employment in this region, the overall size and growth of each industry doesn’t really matter; the region can succeed if it gains only a small share of total investment in that sector.

The forestry/wood products industry has been severely affected by the national downturn in housing construction. However, as the industry recovers and as new uses of this renewable resource are added (e.g., wood pellets for fuel), opportunities for new investment or expanded operations will emerge. The agribusiness industry may not provide a basis for large-scale operations and employment, but several trends (e.g., rising demand for “local” produce, organic foods, biofuels, etc.) offer scope for significant niche activities. Wood is a globally scarce resource, and so increasing export market opportunities will also emerge.

The region could serve as a source of supply chain products, drawing upon the region’s central location on the eastern seaboard. The Commonwealth Advanced Manufacturing Center and Rolls Royce just north of the region in Prince George County serves as major asset in making the case for advanced manufacturing in the region.

VGA faces a challenge in stimulating new information technology investments, which tend to locate in and around major urban areas. However, the region has developed its broadband access to stimulating activity in IT with the location of Microsoft and HP data centers. Both advanced manufacturing and information technology offer the best chances for transforming the regional economy. Finally, the effects of the national

downturn have hit the transportation and logistics industry hard. Nevertheless, as markets evolve and new logistics technologies are introduced, this industry could offer some potential for the region.

A number of other economic activities could be considered as possible targets for regional promotion efforts. Some of these are defined differently from standard industrial categories, and/or may represent segments of the industries noted above, but each offers an advantage from a marketing or impact perspective.

- **IT-Platformed Services** represents the concept of going beyond data centers and storage and into IT applications that are based on high-speed broadband access. Applications services providers (for financial, health, retail and other sectors) could generate a broad range of employment opportunities for regional workers. In addition, small scale IT services can stimulate entrepreneurship, interest in IT worker skills, and diversification that can help develop a region's long-term competitiveness and economic robustness. In order for these activities to take hold, it is likely that some form of targeted IT training as well as relevant entrepreneurial assistance and/or incentives will be needed to attract indigenous or external entrepreneurs.
- **Regional Supply Opportunities** are possible for new investments, particularly those serving the larger industries and economic activities located in nearby metropolitan areas, particularly Hampton Roads, greater Richmond, and Raleigh.

The *Hampton Roads* region is a global center of shipbuilding and repair, with such major companies as Huntington Ingalls Industries and Muller Martini Manufacturing Corp. (Newport News), Norfolk Shipbuilding & Drydock Corp. (Norfolk), and Tecnico Corporation, Volvo Penta and Lockheed Martin Corp. (Chesapeake). Hampton Roads also hosts a wide range of machinery industries such as Sumitomo Machinery Corp. and Plasser American Corp. (Chesapeake), Stihl, Inc., and Busch Manufacturing Company, and Controls Corporation of America (Virginia Beach).

The *greater Richmond* region is home to a considerable number of financial services companies, such as Bank of America, Capital One Services and SunTrust Banks (Henrico County), SunTrust Banks (Richmond), and The Travelers Companies and Capital One Service (Chesterfield County). These could offer "back office" supply opportunities if the region can provide workers with requisite skills. The Richmond region also has a number of pharmaceutical and health care product companies such as Maxxim Medical and Pfizer (Richmond), and Pfizer Pharmaceuticals (Henrico County). These

could offer a number of possible supply opportunities for Eastern Southern Virginia.

The *greater Raleigh/Research Triangle and Greensboro, North Carolina* regions are home to a number of truck, automotive, and heavy equipment companies. Mack Trucks, Volvo Truck, and Volvo are located in Greensboro, while AW North Carolina (automatic transmissions) and John Deere Turf Care have manufacturing operations in the greater Raleigh/Research Triangle area. Aviation and aerospace companies located in these regions include Cessna and Honda Aircraft in Greensboro, and Emrise Corporation, General Electric, and LORD Corporation in the Research Triangle area. Honeywell is located in Rocky Mount, NC. These manufacturing operations might also provide supply chain opportunities for VGA located companies.

To explore regional supply possibilities, the VGA region could contact some of these larger scale firms, either directly or through VEDP, to identify some of their key supply requirements that could be well served by proximity to the core plants. The next step would be to contact current suppliers and/or potential future suppliers to determine whether establishing new capabilities in Eastern Southern Virginia could improve their service and competitiveness.

- **Logistics and Transportation** offer medium term prospects for new investments in view of the region's central location. Logistics firms have for the time being postponed major new sites because of the current extended economic downturn that has created excess capacity. As markets improve, however, leading retailers and transportation companies will renew their search for locations to maximize their logistics and distribution efficiency.
- **Emerging Technology Trends** spawn new investments for applications. Eastern Southern Virginia could track technology developments and position the region as a potential production site. These do not offer immediate opportunities, but the technologies should be monitored to determine whether production facilities could logically be located in the region. Examples of possibilities include:
 - **Aerospace** activities are emerging in Virginia as a result of investments by Rolls Royce, Honda, Boeing and others. These could generate supply opportunities for the region.
 - **Offshore wind power generation** in the coastal region of Virginia is a real possibility, given the geophysical characteristics and potential. If initiatives proceed, it is highly likely that opportunities for state-based

manufacturing of wind towers and equipment will be encouraged or required.

- The use of **biofuels** has not yet matured as alternatives are studied and developed, but applications continue to rise. The region's rich forestry resources provide ample feedstocks for wood pellets, and crop-based biofuels are likely to expand in the future.
 - **Products and services for aging society** will undoubtedly grow in scope as the "baby boomer" generation moves into retirement. In addition to a wide range of new retirement communities, noted below, manufacturers and service providers will expand their goods and services designed to meet expanding needs of the elderly, including housewares, athletic and entertainment products, specialized services, etc.
- **Retirement Communities** are important and growing economic activities, and are flourishing in both northern Virginia and North Carolina. Eastern Southern Virginia lacks the urban environments that are attractive to some retirees, but others may be drawn to the rural/small town environment in the region as well as low costs. Access to health care facilities is somewhat limited in some areas, but arrangements could be made with the hospitals in South Hill and Emporia, along with other regional medical practices, to provide service to retirement communities.
 - **Defense Contracting and Contractor Supply** is not so much an "industry" as it is a well-defined market in terms of ultimate customers, key suppliers and products and services. The region already has several firms that supply the military. In addition, a significant number of major defense contractors are located in the northern Virginia and Norfolk region. Most often these suppliers depend on competitively-let contracts, and so the cost of production and distribution is critical. Eastern Southern Virginia could seek value chain supply opportunities for existing firms, or alternatively position the region as a site for low cost, high quality production. In theory, target markets could also include homeland security and other governmental agencies.
 - **Horticulture** is the research and production of fruits, vegetables, flowers or ornamental plants. The region could benefit from diversifying further from tobacco toward higher value food, as well as nursery plants and ornamental flowers. The fact of rapidly growing consumer interest in organic, Asian and other nontraditional fruits and vegetables, coupled with the expanding attraction of Farm-to-Market products among grocery stores and restaurants,

could provide income opportunities to regional farmers. In 2009, greenhouse and nursery products were one of Virginia's top five agricultural commodities generating \$261.4 million and accounting for 10 percent of Virginia's total farm receipts.¹ However, this represents only 1.6 percent of the national total, so there is plenty of room to expand.

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APPENDIX D - OPTIONS FOR REGIONAL POSITIONING AND MARKETING

Regional (multi-jurisdictional) investment attraction initiatives face a considerable challenge derived from the reality that elected officials want to see new jobs and tax revenue generation in their counties or communities, even though new activities in surrounding areas confer important economic benefits throughout the region. Workers in Eastern Southern Virginia welcome opportunities to commute to jobs in other counties, and in fact there is considerable commuting throughout the region. As mentioned earlier, economic actors do not recognize or nor particularly like jurisdictional boundaries.

A key finding in this assessment is that the counties and towns in Eastern Southern Virginia do not individually possess the “critical mass” of assets, particularly skilled labor, needed by many investors. However, when the entire region is considered, the region offers a much better value proposition to prospective investors. The broader region includes education and training institutions, interstate highways, railroads, broadband and a reasonable labor pool for a variety of industries.

Regionally-based efforts have the additional benefit of allowing for “strategic” efforts. Most local development organizations must deal with near-term employment generation goals, which preclude the time and resources that must be devoted to longer-term strategic initiatives. These efforts could also provide a focal point for the marketing and promotional efforts of VEDP on behalf of the region.

Successful regional development efforts require leadership and cohesiveness among partners. Eastern Southern Virginia stakeholders have begun to coalesce as a region, with economic development professionals meeting regularly and exploring region-wide activities. This momentum could be accelerated with the introduction of a series of activities (e.g., seminars on investment attraction techniques, bus tours to acquaint stakeholder with regional assets, talks by industry experts, meetings with VEDP promoters, etc.) that could be scheduled at regular meeting times. It would also be desirable for the regional stakeholders to establish some form of leadership structure among the group. Effective leadership of either individual initiatives (such as those noted below) or the overall regional program is critical to achieving sustainability and results.

A regional marketing approach that might make sense for Eastern Southern Virginia could include some of the following initiatives:

1. Develop marketing materials that encompass the assets and attractions of the regional as a whole. These materials would be available to all relevant stakeholder groups. Specific areas of focus could be:
 - A comprehensive cost analysis, showing the labor, land, etc., costs of “typical” or pro forma businesses in the region, as compared to other, more expensive regions, as well as highlighting the various incentives available.

- A clear and compelling statement on the region's labor force, worker skills and attitudes, as well as education and training institutions.
 - A compilation of the region's "lifestyle" amenities (e.g., cost of living, recreational and cultural opportunities, health care facilities, etc.) as well as proximity to major urban centers.
2. Prepare a regional website including economic/investment information and links to county economic development sites.
 3. Craft a concept for positioning the region in the media and key industry groups. Most regions focus on a geographic name or brand. Stakeholders have discussed a regional name, and generally do not prefer existing options based on geography ("Eastern Southern Virginia," "Eastern SOVA," "Eastern Southside," etc.). "Virginia's Gateway" has been taken by the region to the north, as has "Virginia's Heartland." Geographically, the region lies in south-central Virginia. Possible options to consider could be "South-Central Virginia," "Midland Virginia," "Virginia's Entryway Region," or "Virginia's Hinterland." An alternative would be to focus on a "message" such as positioning the region as the "healthy lifestyle region" or "ideal quality and low cost supplier" to the mid-Atlantic region.
 4. Prepare a plan for pro-active marketing of a few key, target industries that best fit the region and could be carried out by both VEDP and regional organizations. Regional representatives could attend relevant industry association conferences, advertisements could be placed in industry publications and websites, and cold calls could be made to leading companies in those industries. The goal would be to generate an increasing number of viable leads into the region as a whole.
 5. Design a set of simple but adhered to guidelines for collaboration (and competition) among regional economic development groups. Determining the dividing line between collaboration and competition will necessarily be complex. However, major investment prospects are usually much more impressed when they see regional stakeholders stand shoulder to shoulder.

The objective of such an approach would by no means be to eliminate nor limit the activities of existing county development organizations. Instead, it would be directed at

providing additional positioning and marketing resources from the state and other sources, with the end goal being to expand the inflow and size of investment prospects into the region.

Beyond marketing and promotion, the concept of a regional approach could be applied to other initiatives to “improve the product” that would otherwise be difficult due to lack of resources or economies of scale. Possibilities include:

- **Regional Education and Training Initiative.** In view of the importance of worker skills, and efforts to enhance educational attainment rates and advanced skills training throughout the region could be explored. Regional educational leaders, working in collaboration with economic development professionals, could collectively develop a series of metrics (e.g., graduation rates, test scores, STEM education attainment, etc.) and create initiatives to achieve them. In addition, the region could take steps to increase the involvement of major state universities in the region, such as the establishment of joint satellite campuses.
- **Regional Entrepreneurship Program.** Most of the time and effort of regional economic development groups is devoted to attracting new investment from outside the region. As noted in this report, a number of productive activities (e.g., IT-platformed services, horticulture, travel/hospitality, wood products, etc.) are conducive to small-scale operations started by local entrepreneurs. A regional entrepreneurship program could utilize existing assistance programs, establish new activities, highlight opportunities for small business start-ups, and focus more attention on solutions to other possible constraints such as “last mile” broadband access or SME financing from a regional perspective.