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@CORRIDOR News



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Quarterly News & Updates of Mount Rogers Development Partnership, Inc.

Region is Virginia's aCORRIDOR

The Mount Rogers Development Partnership is announcing a new name and brand identity for the region. Formerly the Peaks of Virginia, the area will be marketed as Virginia's aCORRIDOR.

The 'a' in aCORRIDOR stands for access. Virginia's aCORRIDOR provides companies with access to markets, technology and transportation, taking advantage of the region's location at the crossroads of Interstates 81 and 77.

By locating in Virginia's aCORRIDOR, businesses will have access to Eastern and Midwestern markets from the interstate crossroads. The region's access to technology begins with the fiber optics network capabilities offered

by Bristol Virginia Utilities and travels throughout the region on the designated Virginia's Technology Corridor.



VIRGINIA'S aCORRIDOR
access to markets, technology & transportation

"We've been working on re-branding the region since our workshop last November, where many said the old name did not accurately describe what our region has to offer," said Andy Hall, executive director of the Mount Rogers

Development Partnership.

The marketing committee of the Mount Rogers group, made up of economic development professionals from the six counties and two cities represented, created the name and recommended it to the board of directors.

"It was time to reassess what we have to offer in our region and to update our image to site consultants and target industries," said Sally Morgan, Smyth County's director of community development. "More than choosing a name, it was a process to identify our strengths and position our region in the minds of site consultants and companies looking for a new home."

Partnership markets the region

Created in 1989, the Mount Rogers Development Partnership Inc. is a regional marketing organization that represents a population of nearly 200,000 in six counties and two cities in Southwest Virginia. Stretching from Bristol to Galax, mostly along Interstates 81 and 77, the group

represents the two cities and Washington, Smyth, Wythe, Grayson, Bland and Carroll counties.

The marketing group is financed by a \$1 per capita assessment in the represented counties and cities plus private funding. The Partnership is designed to combine the re-

sources of the area to market the region. The goal is to consolidate marketing into one agency so individual localities will not have to duplicate spending on marketing resources. The Partnership works with local governments to enhance their economic development programs.

From My Perspective....



Andy Hall
Executive Director

Exciting things are happening in the aCORRIDOR. One of the most energizing experiences is the choice of a new brand identity for our region. Starting last November when we held a strategic planning session with staff of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP), there was talk of updating our image and bringing it into today's competitive world of economic development. One hot topic at the strategy session was the name we use when marketing our region of Virginia. Many Partnership board members and other community leaders felt that Peaks of Virginia did not adequately describe what we are all about. In fact, the seeds for a com-

plete self-evaluation exercise were planted at this session.

So, our marketing advisory committee took on the task of re-examining the region's attributes and weaknesses, updating target industry lists—basically re-branding the region to position our area in the minds of site consultants and businesses looking to relocate or expand. The marketing advisory committee is a strong group, made up of local economic development professionals from the counties and cities the Partnership represents. They participated in a branding workshop and worked with marketing consultant Susan Copeland to create a brand identity for the region. This group approved a new name and logo design and recommended it to the board of directors.

Now that we have a new identity in place, we are moving along on developing print marketing materials and a website to market Virginia's aCORRIDOR. These essential marketing tools will help us in our efforts to do our 'real jobs' - attract new business and industry to the region.

I have attended trade shows and conferences representing Virginia's aCORRIDOR, including the recent International Manufacturing Technology Show in Chicago, the Southeast U.S.-Japan meeting in Charleston, SC, and the Virginia Economic Developers Association fall conference in Portsmouth. Coming up is the IDRC/CoreNet Global World Congress in San Diego in November.

We continue to strengthen our working relationships with VEDP, and especially with Joe Gillespie, VEDP's community assistance coordinator who lives in Southwest Virginia.

We've taken some time to plan, re-group and take a fresh look at ourselves. We're poised to move forward and revitalize our region's economic development efforts. This newsletter is one of the tools we plan to use to keep our region's residents informed.

Trade Show Activity

**"ATTENDING
TRADE SHOWS
WITH VEDP IS A
GOOD WAY FOR
LOCAL ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
OFFICIALS TO
MARKET THE
REGION"**

Some aCORRIDOR localities are sending their economic development officials to upcoming trade shows with VEDP. Christianne Parker of Washington County will attend the SAE International Truck & Bus Meeting & Exhibition Nov. 18-20 in Detroit. Carroll County is sending a representative to COMDEX (Technology) Trade Show in November. Sally Morgan of Smyth

County participated with VEDP in a marketing mission in Ohio and Pennsylvania in July and the International Woodworking Machinery and Furniture Supply Fair in August.

Who's involved in marketing advisory committee?

The marketing advisory committee of the Mount Rogers Development Partnership is comprised primarily of the economic development professionals from the counties and cities represented in Virginia's aCORRIDOR. This group meets monthly and includes:

@ Sally Morgan, Director of Community Development, Smyth County

@ Christianne Parker, Assistant County Administrator & Economic Development Director, Washington County

@ Tom Elliott, Economic Development Director, Grayson County

@ Dr. Alan Hawthorne, Director, Joint IDA (Wytheville, Wythe County, Rural Retreat)

@ Dan Campbell, City Manager, City of Galax

@ Gary Elander, Economic Development Director, Carroll County

@ Jerry Brown, Director, Bristol Virginia Office of Economic Development

@ Kim Hummel, Mount Rogers Planning District Commission

@ Linda DiYorio, Congressman Rick Boucher's Office

@ Joe Gillespie, Community Assistance Manager, VEDP

Partnership board elects officers for new fiscal year

The Mount Rogers Development Partnership Board of Directors is comprised of representatives of the six county and two city governments served by the marketing organization and members of the private business sector. The board elected new officers at its July 31 meeting.

Danny Jessee, manager of customer services for Bristol Virginia Utilities, who represents Bristol Virginia City Council on the board, was elected chairman. Joe Derting, representing the Washington County Board of Supervisors, just completed his term as chairman of the Partnership board and was elected to serve as vice chairman.

Pete Montague, a retired executive of American Electric Power, represents the Washington County Chamber of Commerce, and was re-elected as secretary. David Dillow, an executive with First Virginia Bank-Southwest, serving as a business leader director on the board, was elected treasurer.



Mount Rogers Development Partnership Board of Directors officers include, from left, Joe Derting, vice chairman; Danny Jessee, chairman; Pete Montague, secretary; and David Dillow, treasurer.

Recently the board added two business leaders to the group. They are E. Will Davis, state economic develop-

ment manager for AEP, and Larry L. Davis, president and CEO of Marley Mouldings, LLC in Marion.

Marley Mouldings, AEP, Sprint are top private supporters

In addition to the \$1 per capita assessment from the counties and cities represented by the Mount Rogers Development Partnership, private business financial support is essential to the successful marketing of Virginia's aCORRIDOR.

"We are committed to economic development in Southwest Virginia," says Will Davis, American Electric

Power's economic development manager for Virginia, and a recent appointee to the

Partnership Board of Directors as a business leader director. "Supporting a regional marketing organization like this one is an excellent way to further the development of the region."

An existing aCORRIDOR business, Marley Mouldings in Marion, and another with significant presence in the region, Sprint Mid-Atlantic Operations, are leading contributors.

"The Mount Rogers Development Partnership also helps those of us who are already operating here to create and maintain jobs," says Larry Davis, president and CEO of Marley Mouldings. He also was recently appointed

to the board as a business leader director. "Our company appreciates the efforts of the Partnership in promoting our entire region as an excellent place to live and work."

Other private sector supporters include Wachovia (First Union); BBT of Abingdon; Thompson & Litton, Inc. of Wise; Anderson & Associates of Blacksburg; Peed & Bortz of Blacksburg; and the John S. Clarke Co. Inc. of Winston-Salem.





VIRGINIA'S aCORRIDOR
 access to markets, technology & transportation

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How regional marketing works....

A regional marketing organization like the Mount Rogers Development Partnership provides “economies of scale” to its represented counties and cities and eliminates duplication of efforts.

“Having the Partnership marketing Virginia’s aCORRIDOR allows the localities to concentrate on developing their product,” says Andy Hall, executive director.

“Industries look at labor availability from a regional perspective, not from individual counties and cities. As a group, we enjoy a full-time,

professional economic development staff.”

How regional marketing works:

- Generates prospect activity with external and internal marketing through trade shows, marketing missions, target industry initiatives, advertising, web site, special events
- Enhances communication in the region
- Coordinates prospect visits
- Generates marketing materials with a regional focus and emphasis
- Collects and analyzes regional demographic data

In 1985, the Southwest Virginia Economic Development Commission recommended creating a regional marketing organization in Southwest Virginia.

The Partnership’s mission is to create jobs, broaden the tax base and improve the standard of living for residents of the Mount Rogers region—Virginia’s aCORRIDOR.