

**New Council Member
 Jordan Miles**



Photo courtesy Jordan Miles

The Commonwealth Regional Council (CRC) is pleased to welcome Thomas “Jordan” Miles III as the Council’s new primary representative from Buckingham County. Miles represents District 4 on the Buckingham County Board of Supervisors, having been elected to the seat in 2019. He succeeds Morgan Dunnivant, who served as Buckingham’s primary representative on the CRC for the last four (4) years. Miles also succeeds Dunnivant as CRC’s Treasurer.

A native of Buckingham County, Miles lives in the Buckingham Court House Village and serves as Eucharistic Minister and Senior Warden at Emmanuel Episcopal Church. Miles is Director of Nutrition and Transportation at Piedmont Senior Resources Area Agency on Aging, which is based in Farmville. Before that, he served as Managing Editor and Reporter for *The Farmville Herald* and as a news reporter and announcer for radio station WFLO in Farmville.

Miles is very active in the community. As a member of the Buckingham Chamber of Commerce, he serves as vice-chair on the board of directors and chairs two chamber committees. Miles is also a member of the Buckingham Lions Club, a member of the board of directors for the Buckingham Village Preservation Group, and was founder and director of Glenmore Day. In addition, Miles was the chair of the CRC’s Comprehensive Economic Development Committee.

“Regional leverage is going to be the key to success for rural Virginia,” Miles said. “I was born, raised, and have always lived in rural Virginia. My heart is in this community and region. I’m proud to represent Buckingham on the Commonwealth Regional Council and serve as its Treasurer where we can continue to advocate for controlled economic growth and maintain a fiscally conservative budget for our council.”

“I’m proud of the work the CRC has accomplished and will accomplish in the future,” Miles said. “I was heavily involved in the CEDS process and I’m optimistic of our future designation, which will bring more job opportunity to this region.”

Dunnivant Honored

At its December 2019 Council meeting, the CRC held a breakfast to honor Dunnivant for his service to the Council. Dunnivant was appointed to the CRC in 2016 and took over the role of CRC Treasurer in early 2019. He succeeded the CRC’s previous treasurer, C. R. “Bob” Timmons, Jr. – who stepped down from the Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors and the CRC January 31, 2019. The CRC staff and Council would like to thank Mr. Dunnivant for his service to the Council, and wish him and his family well.



From left to right: David Emert, Prince Edward County; Thomas Gleason, Amelia County (CRC Vice Chair); Mike Hankins, Lunenburg County (CRC Chair); Morgan Dunnivant; Melody Foster (CRC Executive Director); Gary Walker, Charlotte County (CRC Secretary).

Photo courtesy Alexa Massey, *The Farmville Herald*

Chesapeake Bay WIP Update



Cam Johnson, Regional Planner, leads a meeting on the previous phase of the Chesapeake Bay WIP
CRC Staff Photo

The Commonwealth Regional Council (CRC) has executed a new contract with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to assist in continuance of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP), up until December 31, 2020.

The CRC is continuing to update and add to its matrix of grant opportunities pertaining to WIP funding and will assist in any grant writing for the CRC region. The CRC is also working to educate local stakeholders on the benefits of implementing Best Management Practices, and is working with localities to discover any existing reporting gaps. Educational efforts will be done in collaboration with a number of local water quality organizations including the James River Association, Friends of the Appomattox River, and the Piedmont and Peter Francisco Soil and Water Conservation Districts – all of which already have a number of programs that address water quality issues.

The CRC continues to work with other Chesapeake Bay localities around the State to come up with innovative ways to address water quality and meet the reduction targets set forth by Governor Northam and his administration, along with DEQ. For more information and to stay updated on the WIP and the CRC's progress, go to <http://www.virginiasheartland.org/our-services/planning-projects-administration/>.

CRC Working with Lunenburg on VHDA Community Impact Grant

The Commonwealth Regional Council (CRC) is administering a Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA) Community Impact Grant (CIG) for Lunenburg County to conduct a Housing Study to identify needs in the County. The Berkley Group, LLC. has been chosen as the consultant on this grant, and is working with Lunenburg County to conduct a housing survey, needs assessment, and prioritized plan of recommended actions moving forward. A kickoff meeting was held in Lunenburg County on October 30, 2019 between housing coalition team members (Lunenburg County, Towns of Kenbridge/Victoria officials and stakeholders), CRC staff and VHDA staff to discuss project expectations and study outcomes. A kickoff meeting between the consultant, housing coalition members, and the CRC was held on December 11, 2019 to discuss the project timeline and expectations of all parties involved.

This project is expected to last through the summer of 2020, and conclude with a Housing Study presentation to the Lunenburg County Board of Supervisors, Kenbridge Town Council, and Victoria Town Council. A comprehensive list of recommendations and prioritization plan is expected to be developed by the consultant.

CRC Updating Transportation Long Range Plan

The CRC is currently in the process of updating its 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan. In collaboration with VDOT and CRC Transportation Committee members, the CRC is working towards a 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan for the region.

The Transportation and Mobility Planning Division of VDOT has worked with other agencies to develop VTrans 2040, the Commonwealth's multi-modal long-range plan, and a more detailed subset report known as the 2035 Surface Transportation Plan (STP). The highway element of the 2035 STP includes proposed improvements on Virginia's federal functionally classified roadways. The CRC other Planning District Commissions (PDCs) and regional commissions (PC's) are undertaking their long-range planning processes as the State is undertaking its long-range planning process. VDOT, the PDCs, and local governments are partners in the development of this new initiative to create regional transportation plans in rural and small urban areas that complement those in Virginia's metropolitan areas. Each rural regional plan has a horizon year of 2035 and addresses the anticipated impacts of population and employment growth on the transportation system. This plan will be reviewed and updated as needed. Each rural plan was developed as a vision plan, addressing all needs of the transportation system studied regardless of anticipated funding availability. It is envisioned that each regional plan will be used as a basis to identify transportation funding priorities.

Update on Broadband Access



Evan Feinman addresses the Council during its September 2019 monthly meeting.
Photo by Todd Fortune

State moving towards goal of universal access; Governor requests increase in funding

During a discussion of broadband deployment and funding at the September 18, 2019 CRC Council meeting, Evan Feinman, Director of the Virginia Tobacco Commission and the Governor's Chief Broadband Advisor, said the State was recently able to connect broadband to 71,000 homes and services using funding which includes \$25 million in federal grants awarded to the State. These achievements gets the State closer to its goal, set by Governor Ralph Northam in 2018, to have universal broadband coverage for the State within 10 years.

Feinman said the State has adopted a three-pronged strategy to meet the Governor's connectivity goals: the allocation of funding in future fiscal budgets to assist in connectivity; enacting policy changes to assist in the efficiency and feasibility of connectivity across the State; and alliances with providers to assist municipalities in local connectivity planning. He added that the State is seeking additional block grant funding from the Federal Communications Commission for future connectivity. In addition, in his 2020-2022 State Budget (presented to the General Assembly on December 17, 2019), Governor Northam proposed \$35 million per year in funding to provide broadband access to underserved communities. This is an increase from \$19 million per year that was approved in the previous two-year state budget.

Also during his presentation to the Council, Feinman explained that the expense of infrastructure for broadband connectivity is the same for rural and urban areas; however, in rural communities, there are not enough subscribers to absorb per unit cost of installation. Mr. Feinman stated his office plans to provide grants

for upfront capital expenditures associated with connectivity in rural communities. Recently enacted legislation is intended to lower project costs by creating middle man providers, such as Dominion Energy, to sell B2B and ISP transport to internet providers. Universal connectivity will allow localities to attract new businesses and to engage in competitive commerce, both of which are critical to addressing the economic challenges facing rural communities.

CRC Grant Writing Update

CRC Assists Local Departments with RSAF Grant Applications



APX 4000 Radio
Photo courtesy Motorola Solutions

The Commonwealth Regional Council (CRC) assisted with three (3) applications for the most recent round of the Rescue Squad Assistance Fund (RSAF), which closed on September 16, 2019. The CRC assisted with the following applications:

- Charlotte Court House Fire Department (Charlotte County), for funding to purchase a quick response vehicle.
- Keysville Fire Department (Charlotte County), for funding to purchase an AED use in Cardiac events.
- Charlotte County Rescue Squad, for funding to purchase P25-compliant portable radios.

In early January 2020, the CRC received word that the applications from the Charlotte Court House Fire Department and Charlotte County Rescue Squad were funded. The CRC would like to congratulate those two departments on their awards.

The RSAF, administered by the Virginia Department of Health, provides funding to non-profit EMS agencies and organizations in Virginia. Eligible items include EMS equipment and vehicles, computers, EMS management programs, courses/classes and projects benefiting the recruitment and retention of EMS members. The next round of RSAF grants will open in late January 2020, with applications due by March 15, 2020.

CRC Grant Writing Update Cont.

AFG Application Period to Run from February 3 to March 13

The next round of applications for the FEMA/DHS Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program will run from February 3 to March 13, 2020. Applications are accepted through the program's online application portal. Since 2001, AFG has helped firefighters and other first responders obtain critically needed equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training, and other resources needed to protect the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards. More information on the AFG program is available online at <https://www.fema.gov/assistance-firefighters-grant>. It is important to note that *any fire department planning to apply must have an active registration with SAM.gov* (the System for Award Management) *before applying*.

The Commonwealth Regional Council (CRC) is available to assist – on a first-come, first-serve basis – in writing a grant application and administering these grants (if awarded). Anyone interested in receiving assistance should contact the CRC office at (434) 392-6104.

CRC Awarded Two Additional SHSP Grants for Emergency Planning

The Commonwealth Regional Council (CRC) was awarded two (2) additional grants under the State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) for 2019. The Virginia Department of Emergency Management announced awards on October 8, 2019. For this round, 126 projects totaling nearly \$13.2 million were submitted for funding. Three (3) projects were deemed ineligible, and two were reprogrammed. Of the remaining 121 requests, 54 were selected for funding totaling \$2.5 million.

The two grants awarded to the CRC totaled \$44,280.00. The two projects funded were:

- Development of a Regional Joint Information System/Joint Information Center Plan for Crisis Communications, to define procedures and responsibilities for disseminating information so the localities in the CRC Region will be better prepared to distribute vital information before, during and after a disaster.
- Development of a Regional Family Assistance Center Plan, to help localities in the CRC Region effectively manage how to assist families that are displaced or separated by a disaster.

The CRC will have until June 30, 2021 to complete the work for these two grants.

CRC Assists Two Localities with VDOT TA Set-Asides Applications



VA Route 38 at Amelia County Elementary School
CRC Staff Photo

Transportation Alternatives Set-Asides grant applications were due to VDOT by October 1, 2019. This program, formerly known as Transportation Alternatives (and Transportation Enhancements before that), provides funds for non-motorized transportation projects including bicycle and pedestrian trails, preservation of historic transportation structures including train depots and lighthouses, as well as roadway pull offs and overlooks. The Commonwealth Regional Council (CRC) assisted with two (2) applications:

- Amelia County: Amelia Court House Village sidewalk project, to provide pedestrian infrastructure in the area around the County's three public schools.
- Town of Charlotte Court House: New sidewalks on Route 47 to complete Town's pedestrian network.

The CTB will announce awards in June 2020.

CRC Grant Writing Update Cont.

CRC Assisting Victoria with Dam Safety Grant Application

The Commonwealth Regional Council (CRC) is assisting the Town of Victoria with applications to the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) for dam safety grants through the Dam Safety, Flood Prevention, and Protection Assistance Fund. The Town wishes to conduct Dam Break Inundation Zone mapping and analysis, Emergency Plan Development, and Professional Engineer Inspections for each of the three (3) Town-owned dams. The Town is now in the process of submitting applications for a Conditional Operation Certificate (COC) for each of their dams. Once the applications for COCs are in, the grant applications can be submitted to DCR. Applications are due by 4:00 p.m. local time on February 28, 2020.

The Dam Safety, Flood Prevention, and Protection Assistance Fund helps Virginia localities and dam owners enhance public safety and reduce the risk of property damage from flooding due to dam failures. The funding is divided into four categories: Dam Break Inundation Zone Analysis, Mapping, and Digitization, Probable Maximum Precipitation Impact Analysis and Certification, Emergency Plan Development, and Professional Engineer Inspection. Multiple applications may be submitted per dam, but only one category per application may be selected. The fund requires the public or private dam owners to maintain their dam's state certification, and a fifty percent match is required for each awarded grant.

VDH-ODW Changes Due Date for Funding Applications – Now Due April 10

In January 2020, the Virginia Department of Health-Office of Drinking Water (VDH-ODW) announced that the due date for applications for the 2020 round of grant/loan funding is April 10. This is a change from last year (applications for last year were due by April 1). A number of localities in Planning District 14 have used VDH-ODW funds in recent years for planning and/or construction activities to repair and improve their public water systems.

Typically, there are two different pots of funding – the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) Program, which provides funding (usually loans) for larger construction projects such as water distribution system repair and replacement; and the Water Supply Assistance Grant Fund (WSAG), which provides grants for smaller construction projects such as construction/upgrade of wells and storage tanks and planning grants to develop preliminary plans and engineering documents for future construction funding applications. Applications can be postmarked by April 10.

General information about these funding programs, with all of the changes for this year's round of funding, can be reviewed online at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/drinking-water/financial-construction-assistance-programs/drinking-water-funding-program-details/>.

Next Round of VDOT SRTS Mini-Grants due February 6

The VDOT Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program is currently accepting mini-grant applications for two of its programs:

- Quick-start mini-grants: Meant to help schools advance their SRTS programs. Up to \$1,000 is available to fund eligible non-infrastructure activities that promote SRTS.
- Walkabout mini-grants: Provide recipients with a hands-on walking and bicycling infrastructure assessment/survey and written report about walking and bicycling conditions in the area around their school.

Applications for this round are due by February 6, 2020. More information is available online at http://www.virginiadot.org/programs/srsm_school_travel_plans_and_grants.asp.

The CRC has also started work on two additional plans, funded by SHSP grants awarded under the 2019 round (see story under Grant Writing Update). CRC staff has begun work on a regional Joint Information System/Joint Information Center Plan for Crisis Communications, and a regional Family Assistance Center Plan. The CRC has until June 30, 2021 to complete the activities under these grants.

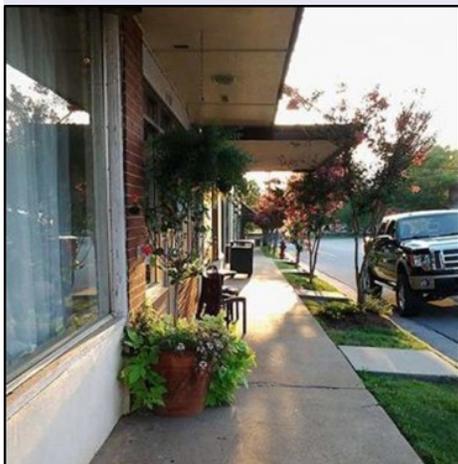
CRC Project Update

Update on Emergency Planning Activities

The Commonwealth Regional Council (CRC) is working on a number of activities related to awarded State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) grants. A SHSP grant awarded in 2018 is funding the development of a regional Volunteer/Donation Management and Coordination Plan for the CRC's five member counties. The CRC has until March 31, 2020 to complete the scope of the 2018 grant.

CRC Project Update Cont.

Keysville Comp Plan Nearing Completion



The Town of Keysville Comprehensive Plan is nearing completion, with a draft Plan finished in December 2019 and presented to the Planning Commission and Town Council for review in January 2020. A public hearing on the Plan has been scheduled for February 10, 2020. The Town's existing Comprehensive Plan was last amended in January 1995 and is in need of a comprehensive update to bring the Plan up to-date. The CRC began work on an update in the Fall of 2018, and has been working with the Town's Planning Commission on the update.

Photo Courtesy Town of Keysville

Dillwyn Housing Rehab Project into Second Round of Houses



The CRC is currently assisting the Town of Dillwyn with a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) that it received from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for a Housing Rehab Project. Two (2) houses have been completed in the first round, a substantial reconstruction and a rehabilitation. The project is currently in its second round, with four (4) houses slated to be addressed – one (1) rehabilitation and three (3) substantial reconstructions. A total of six (6) houses are participating in this project.

Per the Housing and Urban Development Department, 24 CFR 242.1, the term Substantial rehabilitation means "additions, expansion, remodeling, renovation, modernization, repair, and alteration of existing buildings, including acquisition of new or replacement equipment

Photo Courtesy of the CRC

Member profile – Amelia County

Starting with this edition, the newsletter will include a new feature – a profile of a CRC member county. This is not a data profile with a lot of information about the locality, but a highlight of things you may not know about each locality. With this issue, we are highlighting Amelia County.

Amelia County is on the edge of the Richmond region; however, it is rural in nature and boasts a number of natural/recreational resources/features. They include: Sailor's Creek Battlefield State Park, located on Route 617 near the convergence of Amelia, Nottoway and Prince Edward Counties, includes historic structures to commemorate one of the last battles of the Civil War and includes trails for visitors); Amelia Wildlife Management Area, located on Route 652 (pictured), which was set aside by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries for fishing and hunting deer, turkey, and other small game; and the Merlin Aerodrome, located on Route 602, which offers glider flights and aeronautical training. In addition, The Appomattox River and Lake Chesdin both provide fishing and canoeing. Amelia County is also known for vast mineral resources including mica, kaolin, feldspar, quartz, and amazonite. Amateur miners can try their luck at the Morefield Mine, located on Route 628.

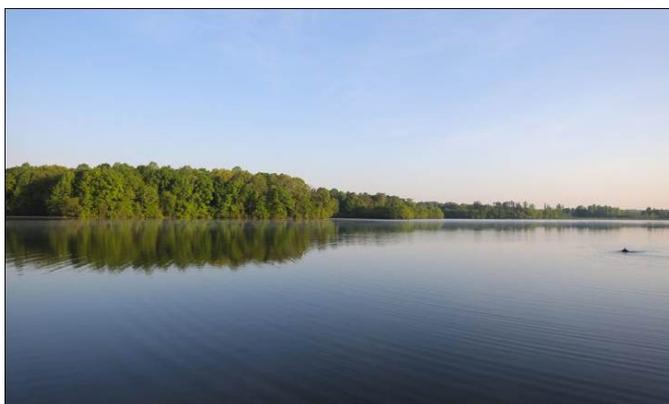


Photo Courtesy of DGIF

Regional Statistics

Unemployment Rates, Planning District 14: August – November 2019				
Locality	August	September	October	November
Amelia County	2.9%	2.5%	2.5%	2.6%
Buckingham County	3.8%	3.0%	2.9%	3.8%
Charlotte County	3.4%	3.0%	3.3%	3.1%
Cumberland County	3.1%	2.5%	2.5%	2.7%
Lunenburg County	3.3%	2.9%	2.7%	2.7%
Nottoway County	2.6%	2.5%	2.5%	2.7%
Prince Edward County	3.6%	3.0%	2.9%	3.2%
Virginia	2.8%	2.7%	2.6%	2.4%
United States	3.7%	3.5%	3.6%	3.3%

Source: Virginia Employment Commission (rates are NOT seasonally adjusted)

Tourism Impacts, Planning District 14: 2018

Locality	Expenditures	Payroll	Employment	State Tax Re- ceipts	Local Tax Re- ceipts
Amelia County	\$5,871,896	\$1,276,820	55	\$321,874	\$160,233
Buckingham County	\$12,208,436	\$2,619,044	119	\$582,608	\$347,506
Charlotte County	\$14,364,245	\$2,962,501	139	\$614,824	\$371,193
Cumberland County	\$6,245,913	\$1,150,417	56	\$317,870	\$177,799
Lunenburg County	\$5,973,604	\$1,426,290	56	\$228,168	\$169,687
Nottoway County	\$13,580,162	\$2,664,124	123	\$761,091	\$338,022
Prince Edward Co.	\$25,858,576	\$5,435,202	242	\$1,106,104	\$482,024
Virginia	\$25,843,544,306	\$6,099,241,260	234,494	\$1,076,976,587	\$701,496,766

Source: Virginia Tourism Corporation, U.S. Travel Association

Calendar of Events

February

- 5 – Center for Rural Virginia Rural Caucus Reception, Richmond
- 6 – Applications for VDOT Safe Routes to School Quick-Start and Walkabout mini-grants due
- 6 – Virginia Municipal League/VACO/ Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions (VAPDC) Local Government Day at the General Assembly, Richmond
- 7 – VAPDC Winter Meeting, Richmond
- 12 – Virginia Local Government Management Association (VLGMA) Winter Conference, Charlottesville
- 17 – State and local, CRC offices closed for Presidents Day
- 19 – CRC Monthly Council Meeting, Farmville-Prince Edward Library
- 28 – Applications for grants through the DCR Dam Safety, Flood Prevention, and Protection Assistance Fund due

March

- 8-10 – Virginia Lakes and Watersheds Association Virginia Water Conference, Richmond
- 8-14 – Virginia Flood Awareness Week
- 17 – VAPDC Executive Directors Meeting/Congressional Briefing, Washington, DC
- 18 – CRC Monthly Council Meeting, Farmville-Prince Edward Library
- 29-30 – Virginia Building Code and Officials Association Board Meeting and Mid-Year Conference, Staunton
- 30 – CDBG Competitive grant applications due to DHCD

March 31-April 2 – 31st Annual Environment Virginia Symposium, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington

April

- 10 – Virginia Department of Health-Office of Drinking Water funding applications due (postmarked by this date)
- 13 – CRC Office closed for Easter Holiday
- 15 – CRC Monthly Council Meeting, Farmville-Prince Edward Library
- 27-28 – VAPDC Board of Directors Meeting/Leadership Retreat, location TBD
- 29 – Southeast RCAP Open House and Water is Life! Banquet, Roanoke

May

- Date TBA – VACO Spring Board of Directors Meeting, Nottoway County
- 20 – CRC Monthly Council Meeting, Farmville-Prince Edward Library
- 25 – State and local government, CRC offices closed for Memorial Day

June

- 10-12 – VLGMA Summer Conference, Virginia Beach
- 17 – CRC Monthly Council Meeting, Farmville-Prince Edward Library
- 24 – VAPDC Board of Directors Meeting

The *Regional Reporter* is published by the Commonwealth Regional Council. We can be reached at:

P.O. Box P, One Mill Street, Suite 202

Farmville, Virginia 23901

Phone – (434) 392-6104; Fax – (434) 392-5933

On the web: <http://www.virginiasheartland.org/>

To be included in the CRC's newsletter mailing list, please call (434) 392-6104 or e-mail TFortune@virginiasheartland.org.

CRC Staff

Melody Foster – Executive Director

Todd Fortune – Deputy Director, Newsletter Editor

Cam Johnson – Regional Planner

Kara Robertson – Community Development Planner

Amy Shiffer – Office Manager (Part-time)