

Commonwealth Regional Council

May 2025 Items of Interest



CRC Rebranding Initiative Underway

The Commonwealth Regional Council is excited to announce the launch of a comprehensive rebranding effort to better reflect our mission and enhance our digital presence. This initiative includes the development of a new seal-style logo and the complete rebuild of our website to ensure modern functionality, improved visibility, and ADA compliance. In tandem, CRC will be transferring ownership of the current domain, VirginiasHeartland.org, to the Virginia's Heartland Regional Economic Development Alliance (VHREDA) and pursuing a new domain that better aligns with CRC's identity. With quotes collected from four different companies and agencies, CRC anticipates launching this effort soon.

Upcoming Funding Opportunities:

- Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation
 - Opens July 10, 2025
- FEMA FP&S Grant
 - Closes July 3, 2024
- FEMA SAFER Grant
 - Closes July 3, 2024
- VTC VA250 Marketing Leverage Program
 - September 16 – October 23
- VTC Special Events & Festivals Program
 - July 22 – September 11

Grant Assistance:

- Centra Community Grant:
 - Rice VFD (equipment)
 - Drakes Branch VFD (air packs, gear)
 - Charlotte Meals on Wheels (food)
 - Crossroads CS (generators)
- Congressional Directed Spending:
 - Town of Blackstone (Raw water line reconstruction)
- Dominion Energy/VSFA:
 - Rice VFD (hoses)
 - Keysville VFD (PPV fan)
- SEID Grants:
 - Prince Edward (HIT Park Access Rd)
 - Cumberland (Small Area Plan)
 - Amelia (Planning, Potential River Access Points)
 - Blackstone (Raw Water Line)
- DHR BIPOC
 - Mary E Branch (Building Stabilization)

The CRC provides free grant writing services for member localities and local 501C3 non-profits.

Buckingham County Comprehensive Plan Moves Forward

CRC continues to support Buckingham County in updating its Comprehensive Plan. On April 28, CRC staff attended a public hearing with the Planning Commission, which resulted in a formal recommendation for approval to the Board of Supervisors. The recommendation was presented at the May 12 Board meeting, and a public hearing for final approval has now been scheduled for June 9.

Community Engagement Gears Up in Drakes Branch

Progress is steady in the Town of Drakes Branch's Comprehensive Plan update. CRC staff facilitated a work session with the Planning Commission on April 30 to refine the project timeline, identify feedback on the current plan, and prepare for the community meeting. Outreach materials have been distributed, and community meeting activities are in development. The first community meeting is being held on May 28 at 7 p.m. in the Drakes Branch Municipal Building. The next work session is planned for June 25 to evaluate input and finalize a survey.

Tobacco Commission Grants Support Regional Projects

CRC has secured key funding through the Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission for several impactful projects. A regional grant was awarded to support historic designations and catalog vacant buildings in the BOOMS database. Additional funding will assist the ARCH Foundation with a feasibility study for the Mill Building, and help VHREDA enhance regional branding and communications. These grants represent important investments in community revitalization and economic identity across the CRC region.

CRC Participates in the Virginia Highway Safety Summit

CRC Regional Planner, Matt Swartout, represented the organization at the Virginia Highway Safety Summit in Virginia Beach on May 19. Matt focused his attention on the "Rural Roads" sessions, which addressed unique safety challenges and infrastructure solutions for rural communities. His participation ensures that CRC remains engaged in broader state-level conversations about roadway safety and regional transportation planning.

