

Montgomery County | Blacksburg | Christiansburg

Tourism Strategic Plan

Developed with support by the Virginia Tourism Corporation



Virginia 
is for Lovers[®]

September 25, 2013 Revision

Adopted by: Montgomery County, Town
of Blacksburg, and Town of
Christiansburg on _____

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Overview

Tourism is a \$122 million industry in Montgomery County, Blacksburg, and Christiansburg, providing over 1200 jobs. The development and promotion of tourism with applicable assets and attractions will increase visitor interest and spending, and will enhance quality of life of citizens and increase interest in all types of business establishment and expansion. Tourism is a significant economic development strategy for the future of the area.

With these factors considered, this tourism strategic plan was completed in 2013 to assist county and town officials and stakeholders to further develop and promote tourism, and to guide staff and volunteers who oversee tourism focused programming during the following five years and beyond. This plan was developed with wide tourism stakeholder input, including detailed oversight and input by government body leadership. A full situational analysis of tourism was completed as part of the planning process and is summarized within this document. That analysis and other facilitated input from stakeholders were used as reference to draft this plan and the following determined tourism vision, mission, goals and objectives of the plan:

Mission Statement

The Tourism Mission Statement for Montgomery County is: *To stimulate economic opportunity and enhance quality of life by the celebration and sharing of our culture, heritage and natural beauty through authentic visitor experiences. We will promote our destination in a manner that fosters partnerships and sustainable growth.*

Vision Statement

The Tourism Vision Statement for the Montgomery County is:

To be the premier mountain destination for travelers seeking unique recreational experiences in an area rich with natural resources, history, culture, and vibrant communities.

Goal 1

Improve Tourism Marketing

Goal 2

Improve Tourism Infrastructure

Goal 3

Develop and Cultivate Tourism Partnerships

Goal 4

Develop Tourism Education Programming and Advocacy

Goal 5

Promote the Growth Tourism in Montgomery County through Strong Programming and Policy

It is imperative to note that other applicable planning efforts and documents should be referenced and possibly utilized during the implementation of this plan. For example, a tourism study was commissioned by the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce and prepared by Randall Travel Marketing, Inc. of Mooresville, NC in 2008. That study is available as a supplement to this document. Additionally, the Virginia State Tourism Plan was completed in 2013 and includes relevant ideas and recommendations, both as they apply to the entire state and the region in which Montgomery County is located. The Virginia State Tourism Plan can be viewed at www.vatc.org/stp. There are numerous other studies and reference pieces for review and consideration.

Acknowledgments

Montgomery Regional Tourism Operating Board

Craig Meadows, Montgomery County Administrator
Barry Helms, Christiansburg Town Manager
Marc Verniel, Blacksburg Town Manager

Montgomery Tourism Development Council

Krishna Chachra
Tom Norman
Jim Politis
Craig Meadows
Barry Helms
Marc Verniel
Connie Hale
Scott Sink
Melissa Richards
Kathy Drummond
Henry Showalter
Eric Johnsen

This tourism strategic plan is the result of input by the following locality representatives, business owners, organization leaders and other stakeholders:

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>
Diane	Akers	Blacksburg Partnership
Paula	Alston	Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library
Lanny	Belcher	Hilton Garden Inn, Blacksburg
Gail	Billingsley	Smart College Visit.com
Lisa	Bleakley	Director, Montgomery County Regional Tourism Office
Brad	Buchanan	Montgomery County Parks and Recreation
Joyce	Beliveau	Beliveau Estate and Winery
Laureen	Blakemore	Downtown Blacksburg Inc.
Courtney	Bosworth	Radford University- Communications
Heather	Browning	Town of Blacksburg- Community Relations
Kevin	Byrd	New River Valley Planning District Commission
Terry	Caldwell	Town of Christiansburg- Aquatic Center
Donna	Speaks	Mockingbird Café and Bakery
Krishna	Chachra	Town of Blacksburg Town Council and MTDC Chair
John	Coleman	CrossPointe Conference Center
Susan	Coleman	CrossPointe Conference Center
Nancy	Creed	Hilton Garden Inn, Blacksburg
Meghan	Dorsett	Historic Cambria
Karen	Drake	Town of Blacksburg- Planning
Zack	Davis	Intern, Montgomery Chamber of Commerce
Heather	Ducote	Center for the Arts at VT
Brad	Epperley	Town of Christiansburg- Parks and Recreation
Sue	Farrar	Montgomery Museum

Melissa	Georges	The Inn at VT
Marty	Gordon	The News Messenger
Nicole	Hair	Planning Director, Town of Christiansburg
Becky	Hawke Wilburn	Town of Christiansburg- PIO
Jeff	Hedge	BACKCOUNTRY.COM
Barry	Helms	Town of Christiansburg, Town Manager
Cary	Hoge	GM Hampton Inn, Christiansburg
Lynn	Huber	Our Daily Bread Bakery and Café - Marketing
Teresa	Hughes	The Inn at VT
Alvin	Humes	President NAACP-NRV
Steve	Huppert	Christiansburg Town Council
Eric	Johnsen	State Farm and MTDC
Whitney	Knollenberg	VT HTM Graduate Assistant
Bob	Leonard	VT Professor Theater of Arts
Susan	Mattingly	Executive Director, The Lyric Theater
Libby	Mansfield	DOS, Holiday Inn, Christiansburg
Anne	McClung	Director of Planning and Building
Susan	McMains	Montgomery County Tourism Office Assistant
Craig	Meadows	Montgomery County Administrator
Tacy	Newell	Main Street Coffee Depot, Christiansburg
Tom	Norman	GM Courtyard Marriott and MTDC
Richard	Obiso	Attimo Winery
Christina	O'Conner	Christiansburg Citizen (DT organization initiative)
Tara	Ogle	DOS, Hampton Inn, Christiansburg
Graham	Owen	Montgomery County Planning Office
Jeremy	Pedrotti	NRV Superbowl
Kelly	Queijo	Smart College Visit.com
Jim	Politis	Montgomery County and MTDC
Bryan	Rice	Rice Realty
Melissa	Richards	University Relations at VT and MTDC
Ruth	Richey	Montgomery County PIO and MTDC
Ken	Rogers	Holiday Inn University
Randy	Rose	VA Tourism Corporation
Jami	Ryan	Next three Days
Steve	Sandy	Director, Montgomery County Planning Office
Mary	Schnitzer	Christiansburg Institute
Jessica	Schultz	Farmers Market, Blacksburg
Sharon	Scott	Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce
Tom	Shaver	GM, The Inn at VT
Henry	Showalter	Town of Christiansburg and MTDC
David	Smith	GM, Quality Inn Christiansburg
Ellen	Stewart	Blacksburg Farmers Market
Terry	Stike	NRV Superbowl
Russell	Stone	Christiansburg Small Business and VA NAT DEF
Catherine	Sutton	Executive Director, Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce
John	Tutle	SERVPRO
Catherine	VanNoy	Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Commission – Marketing Independent Contractor

Phillip	Vaught	NRV Magazine
David	Verde	Christiansburg Citizen (DT organization initiative)
Marc	Verniel	Town of Blacksburg, Town Manager
Ruth	Waalkes	Center for the Arts at VT
Barbara	Walker	Forestry Service
Lea	Wall	Holiday Inn Blacksburg
Randy	Wingfield	Town of Christiansburg, Asst. Town Manager
Bernie	Wurtzburger	The Oaks Victorian Inn Bed and Breakfast
Linda	Wurtzburger	The Oaks Victorian Inn Bed and Breakfast

Randall Rose, partnership marketing development specialist with the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC), facilitated the strategic planning process and drafted this document with the assistance and input of the listed stakeholders. The outline and some general content of this plan follow a format that has been used for developing other locality tourism plans in Virginia. Tourism Director, Tourism Director worked with stakeholders and government leadership to edit and complete the final version.

Background

Background – Development of this Plan

In late 2012, Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) was engaged to facilitate stakeholder input sessions and develop the draft version of this plan. In preparation, VTC met with the newly formed Montgomery Regional Tourism Office to provide an overview of the planning process to the tourism advisory committee and to prepare for stakeholder input sessions. Input sessions were held on December 12 and January 24, 2013 at CrossPointe Conference Center in Christiansburg, VA. The document was then framed based on the stakeholder input received. Additional relevant data was added at time of editing. A final review of the draft of this document was conducted during a facilitated session March 19, 2013 as well as review by board of supervisors and town council members during their work sessions in April 2013. Final changes and edits were overseen by tourism staff and advisory before a final review and adoption by the Montgomery County, the Towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg and the tourism operating board.



December and January
Planning Sessions

Background – Past Tourism Efforts

Montgomery County has entertained visitors for many years, from the Native Americans and early settlers that traveled the Wilderness Road hundreds of years ago, to people visiting family and friends or recreating on the New River during the centuries since. Yellow Sulphur Springs and Allegany Springs provided an oasis for Montgomery County, Virginia, since before Blacksburg was incorporated in 1798. Generations of weary travelers have benefited from her waters and her hospitality. However, not until recent decades has planning and programming been formally put in place to facilitate tourism interest and visitation. The following timeline highlights those efforts:

1970's:

- In the late 1970s a small group of **Blacksburg** merchants a plan to sponsor an annual summer fair. Their efforts did long to root, and eventually the celebration they founded be the Steppin' Out Street Festival. Buoyed by the success Steppin' Out and encouraged by town citizens, the merchants created a formal organization to represent and the town's Central Business District.



hatched
not take
grew to
of
advance

1810 Hotel

1980's:

- In 1988, the Downtown Merchants of **Blacksburg** (DMOB) was formed and created special events to be added to the successful Steppin' Out.

1990's:

- The Summer Arts Festival (a joint effort by **Virginia Tech** and the Town of **Blacksburg**) was established in 1991. This Festival is held each summer beginning in June and ending in late August. Events include: live theatre productions; gallery exhibitions at the Armory Art Gallery; outdoor musical concerts on Henderson Lawn, an Independence Day Celebration sponsored by the Town of Blacksburg; the Steppin' Out Street Festival, Art at the Market, Summer Solstice sponsored by the Downtown Merchants Association; three classic films sponsored by and being shown at The Lyric Theatre on College Avenue.
- The Blacksburg Farmers Market opened.
- Revitalization of downtown **Christiansburg** committee established to work on revitalization ideas. Among the ideas was the concept and developed strategy to establish as New River Farmer's Market and Processing Center. The Main objective was to create a retail outlet for local farms to sell their product while enhancing tourism and commerce for the community.

There are numerous sporting events beyond highly visible Virginia Tech competitions. For example, the New River Valley Superbowl has hosted approximately 39,000 out-of-town bowlers in tournaments since the late 1990's.

- Adventure World Skate and Fun Center in Christiansburg opened. Adventure World hosts laser tag, roller skating, an arcade, and designated spaces for parties and events.

2000's:

The **Blacksburg** Partnership is a non-profit, independent economic development organization formed by the town, business and university communities. The purpose is to bolster the vitality of Blacksburg through projects that attract visitors and retail prospects. Partnership projects include development of property, the revitalization of retail districts, special events and the creation of marketing programs. Events include Fork and Cork, Brew Do. Restaurant Week is a partnership between Downtown Merchants of Blacksburg and Blacksburg Partnership.

The **Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce** launched a regional tourism initiative during this decade. In 2007, a tourism development council was formed and the Chamber worked with the localities on a contract basis in support of the tourism initiative. This effort was suspended in June of 2009.

A tourism study was commissioned by the **Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce** and prepared by Randall Travel Marketing, Inc., Mooresville, NC in 2008. The objective of this study was to conduct comprehensive visitor research and develop a strategic marketing plan to effectively position and market Blacksburg and Christiansburg as a travel and tourism destination of choice.

Downtown Blacksburg Inc. holds first Summer Solstice in Downtown Blacksburg in June.

2010's

- The **County** continues to grow its visitor offerings. Examples include: Sinkland Farms in Riner with its wildly popular Pumpkin Festival in October, the EastMont Tomato Festival Shawsville held in August and three wineries including Attimo Winery; Firefly Hill Vineyards; Maison Beliveau Estate Winery, Bed and Breakfast and Event Venue.

The **Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce** worked with Mid Sweden University, Ostersund on a lodging front line employee study in January 2010. The study was intended to gather a baseline measure of the level of destination knowledge the front line hospitality employee possessed. This information would be instrumental in the development of a training program for hotel front desk staff.

The **Christiansburg** Aquatic Center opened to the public in July 2010. The completed facility encompasses 64,000 square feet, emerged as a new department for the Town. The Town's unique partnership with Virginia Tech has been an influential factor in the fast success of this facility; in addition to hosting the university's home meets, the CAC has also taken the lead in Virginia for hosting age group championships. The meets can bring up to 800 swimmers and divers, along with their families to Christiansburg and the surrounding area.

In 2011, the **Towns and County** agreed to form a joint tourism office to support tourism efforts across the Towns and the County. A Tourism Development Advisory Council was formed and a Tourism Executive Director hired in 2012.

The **Montgomery Regional Tourism Office** began work sessions to develop the strategic plan for tourism in Montgomery County late 2012 and continued through the first calendar quarter of 2013.

Locality **Parks and Recreation Departments** and private sports organizations have been and continue to be interested in hosting amateur youth sports in the region such as Dixie Youth Baseball, USSSA Baseball, softball, basketball, soccer, and rugby. Those departments are also very involved in outdoor recreation such as river activity, cycling, hiking trails, etc. that attract the various types of adventure travelers.



Christiansburg Aquatic Center

Situational Analysis

As an important aspect of the planning process, the stakeholders conducted a situational analysis of tourism to help determine the goals and objectives of this plan, including an overall situational analysis as well as a focused analysis on premier tourism assets, targeted visitors, infrastructure, marketing, policy, and education/customer service. The observations and recommendations made by stakeholders follow.

Overall/General Situational Analysis - SWOT

The discussion and identification of SWOT - S (Strengths) W (Weaknesses) O (Opportunities) and T (Threats) was used as a key method in developing this tourism strategic plan for Montgomery County. Strengths and Weaknesses are internal factors, while Opportunities and Threats are external factors. Goals, Objectives, Targets, Measures, and Initiatives were all determined after careful consideration of the SWOT analysis:

Strengths:

- I-81/Rt.460- Easy access, well-traveled
- Ample lodging base, good variety, diverse (hotels and bed and breakfasts)
- Numerous annual festivals and events *
- Proximity of Virginia Tech, Radford University and New River Community College
- Less than a two-hour drive from many other Virginia higher education institutions
- National and International exposure/awareness through universities
- Athletic facilities- including Harkrader Sports Complex and Christiansburg Aquatic Center
- Variety of dining options - cultural diversity
- Mix of franchises and local-owned businesses
- Natural beauty- mountains, river, trails
- Recreational (Outdoor) trails
- Huckleberry Trail
- Local Artisans, craftsmen, and authors
- Golfing opportunities
- Historical sites and rich history
- Agriculture uses/activities- agribusiness
- Good hospitality base for lodging and dining
- Public safety- low crime rate
- Diverse economic base
- Infrastructure to provide good home base to day travel in neighboring counties
- Close proximity (within 1 hour) of regional attractions
- Growing number of wineries in Montgomery County and close proximity to other wineries
- Teen activities (Pandapas Pond, Adventure World etc.)
- Progressive/innovative citizens and businesses
- Educated and affluent community
- Shopping Opportunities (mall, unique shops, antique shops, nearby counties unique shopping)
- Local government is supportive of tourism
- Cooperation (towns, leaders, etc.)
- New River and regional planning for focus on this asset
- Jefferson National Forest
- Proximity to the Blue Ridge Parkway
- Diverse portfolio of visitor offerings, including unique downtown Blacksburg, the beautiful country-side and authentic experiences of the County to familiar franchise shopping, dining and entertainment in Christiansburg.
- Good sleeping room inventory
- Scenic vistas and open spaces/green spaces
- Wilderness Road lends connection with America's history



- Thriving Arts community with venues such as the Blackbox Theatre, New Center for the Arts at VT, and Lyric Theater
- Small town community charm.
- Proximity to Civil War Trail
- Live Music events
- Proximity to Appalachian Trail
- Participation in The Crooked Road and `Round the Mountain marketing organizations
- Good public bus transportation. Poised with rail for any future passenger train service.
- Four distinct seasons
- Established festivals: Stepping out, Pumpkin Festival, Tomato Festival, Heritage Festival, Heritage Day, Wilderness Trail Festival, International Festival, FloydFest (proximity and spillover)
- Nature education opportunities (birding, Wildflowers, mushrooms)
- Proximity to Roanoke Valley
- Corporate presence (BAE, Moog, Volvo, Backcountry.com)
- Good health care industry
- Growing number of tech startups
- Social media savvy population

Weaknesses:

- Airlift
- Sign regulations/ordinance creates way-finding challenges
- Perception that Virginia Tech football is all there is to do
- Low promoted potential visitors activities
- Poor marketing, including lack of knowledge on events
- Limited promotional resources for businesses
- No daily local print media
- Little collaboration in marketing
Online search- Montgomery County, VA comes in second to Montgomery County, MD
- No true tourism visitor service location- visitor center is needed
- Community image internal and external
- Disparity in income distribution
- Territorialism due to county and town "lines". Visitor doesn't know, see nor care about these.
- Limited advertising opportunities highways and interstate
- Minimal tourism focused funding
- Differing mindsets between the localities
- Lack of knowledge and celebration of our history (coal, Appalachia)
- Limited children's activities
- Limited multipurpose sports facilities, thereby limiting sports tourism
- Limited meeting and conference space, thereby limiting meetings industry
- Low profile outside of Southwest Virginia
- Not using I-81 to its full potential
- Image to others and self-image
- Limited transportation access

Opportunities:

- Many groups/partnerships already exist and should be utilized to full potential
- Farming heritage/ farm tours / farmers market
- Increasing cultural diversity
- Proximity to major markets
- Rails provide potential for a passenger train service
- Terrain- environment
- Outdoor activities
- Creative talent
- Universities
- Young people in area
- Accessibility
- Diversity of potential activities
- History
- Not saturated, over-promoted. Leaves room for responsible growth
- Museums
- Research outcomes- interest by visitors is seeing technology
- Collaboration with other counties and tourism agencies/ businesses
- Strong businesses in county, especially retail
- Businesses that cater to young professionals
- Lower cost of living
- Ease of life
- Virginia Tech - brand visibility
- Assets still open to development
- Three local government cooperating
- Momentum – projects in process
- Significant growth in parks and outdoor activities
- Existing visitor base
- Retirement destination
- Virginia Tech attracts young professionals, tourism draw, etc.
- Quality of life
- Technology resources
- Opportunity to establish new brand (not having to change or overcome an old brand)
- Public-private partnerships
- Multiple business cooperatives
- Opportunity to pool resources
- Wedding destination development
- Partnerships (Ex. Antiques and History to apply for MLP \$\$\$)
- Retirement Draw- College town
- Hub for regional attractions such as: Floyd, Claytor Lake, Appalachian Trail, The Cascades, BlueRidge Parkway
- High School Tournaments, Sports Clinics
- VT/RU- Sports, Academic, Cultural, Cont. Ed Conferences



PAR Works AR Technology, Finalists in 2013 SXSW Blacksburg Tech Startup



Agricultural Heritage and Resources

Threats:

- Size of County may prove to be a challenge when deciding how to market
- Identity (lack of, overshadowed VT Football or lingering one from VT shootings)
- Locations (somewhat isolated from metro area)
- Lack of focus in programming
- Lack of trust
- Neighboring regions competing
- Current visitors not happy with visit
- Ourselves (self-Image)
- Economy and reduced funding
- Fuel prices (drive market)
- Lack of directed teamwork/partnerships
- Condition of I-81 (increased truck traffic)
- Limited local transportation options
- Expensive airfare
- No passenger rail service
- Infrastructure (keeping up with population growth)
- Dominance of Virginia Tech in regards to consumer awareness
- Limited political leverage (statewide)
- Perception of town/student relationship
- Losing Virginia Tech sports seasons

Focused Situational Analysis – Premier Tourism Assets

Following is a list of the determined premier tourism assets for Montgomery County, which are the assets that are most likely to be shared first and prominently with potential visitors through advertising and promotion. A complete inventory of all tourism assets in Montgomery County has been completed separately and is available as a supplement to this plan.



Virginia Tech Night Game

Markets and Assets

Assets lend themselves to certain markets

ASSETS

	Competitive Sports	Outdoor Recreation	Leisure	Group Meetings	Heritage and History	Arts and Culture
Huckleberry Trail		•				
Christiansburg Aquatic Center	•		•			
Rails to Trails: Proximity to the Virginia Creeper Trail		•	•		•	
The Black House			•		•	
Montgomery Museum and Lewis Miller Regional Art Center			•		•	
The Christiansburg Institute			•		•	
VT- Center for the Arts						•
Antiques Roadshow (Auction Gallery local)			•		•	
Claytor Lake		•	•			
Ball fields and facilities	•	•	•			
Hiking trails	•	•	•		•	
Blacksburg Price House Nature Center						
Crooked Road Music Trail			•		•	•
Rails for Railroad enthusiasts			•		•	
Cascade Falls in neighboring Giles County- 11 waterfalls		•	•			
Harkrader Sports Complex	•					
Appalachian Trail		•	•			
Historical Attractions			•		•	
Smithfield						
Plantation			•		•	
Odd fellows Hall			•		•	
Shaffer Memorial Cemetery (an African-American cem.)					•	
Mary Ingles Draper					•	
Round the Mountain Artisan Trail			•			•
The Inn at VT Conference Center			•	•		

Markets & Assets

ASSETS	Competitive Sports	Outdoor Recreation	Leisure	Group Meetings	Heritage and History	Arts and Culture
Wineries			•			
NRV Superbowl	•		•			
Agritourism			•		•	
Trout Farm			•			
Sinkland Farms			•			
Kentland Farm			•			
Horse Barns/Shows			•			
Christmas Tree Farms			•			
Shawsville/Elliston Valley			•			
Hethwood Market			•			
Blacksburg Farmers Market			•			•
Christiansburg Farmers Market			•			
Festivals and Events	•	•	•	•	•	•
Numerous Apiaries (honey)			•			
Microbrewery growth			•			
B&B coop (serve/sell local foods)			•			
Lavender Farm At Beliveau			•			
Orchards			•			
National Forest		•	•			
Coffee shops such as Main Street Depot and Lucie Monroes			•			•
Buffalo Farm and Restaurant (unique dining concepts)			•			
3-Bird Berry Farm			•			
Catawba Valley		•	•			
Garden Tours			•			
Mushroom Hunting		•				
CrossPointe Conference Center				•		
Meadowbrook Center- Shawsville						•
NRV Heritage Coalition					•	

Markets & Assets

ASSETS	Competitive Sports	Outdoor Recreation	Leisure	Group Meetings	Heritage and History	Arts and Culture
Live Music (Blacksburg Music Organization)						•
Hotel meeting space				•		
University potential conference space in summer	•			•		
New River	•	•	•			
Pete Dye Golf Course	•	•	•			
Crimpers	•		•			
NRV Junction		•	•			
Putt Putt			•			
Driving Ranges			•			
Golf Courses	•	•	•			
Batting Cages						
Hand in Hand Caboose Park			•			
Frog Pond		•	•			
Recreation Center			•			
Skate Park	•	•	•			
Scenic Byways (Rt. 8)		•	•	•	•	•
Blue Ridge Parkway		•	•	•	•	•
I-81			•	•		

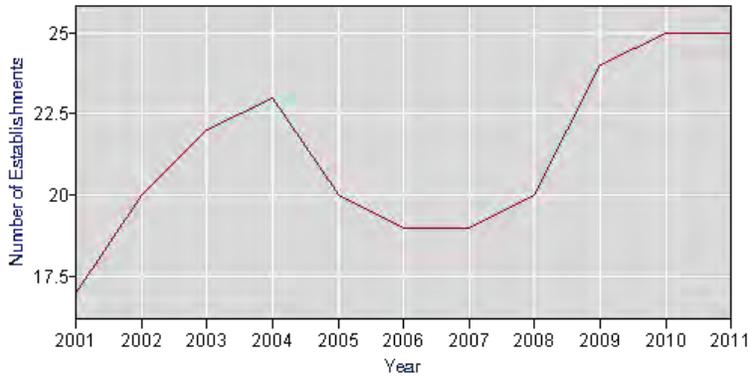
Tourism Infrastructure Snap Shot

In recent years, the area has seen growth in various tourism infrastructure, including lodging, food services, and conference/meeting locations.

Accommodation and Foodservice

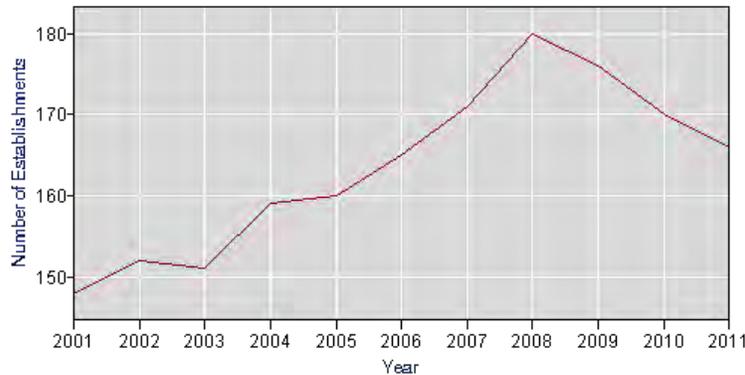
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Montgomery County, Virginia
Accommodations - All establishment sizes
Number of Establishments



Year	Annual
2001	17
2002	20
2003	22
2004	23
2005	20
2006	19
2007	19
2008	20
2009	24
2010	25
2011	25

Montgomery County, Virginia
Food services and drinking places
Number of Establishments



Year	Annual
2001	148
2002	152
2003	151
2004	159
2005	160
2006	165
2007	171
2008	180
2009	176
2010	170
2011	166

- Better promote and develop coalmines, farmlands, agritourism, heritage tourism
- Public facilities (restrooms, vendors, water, rentals) needed on trails etc.
- Air and train travel into the region needs to be more accessible and affordable (i.e.: to support arts festivals and events: national, international artists)
- Public bus transportation is an asset. However, bus travel could be more convenient to Megabus travelers (connecting, making way to hotels etc...) available information to navigate from point A to B.
- May need feasibility study: locations for quality multipurpose sports complex. Inventory of ALL sports events, facilities. Discover capacities and capabilities.
- Some current facilities that house visitors/tourists may need updating/enhancements
- Creation of small business to advance our current recreational events (bike rental shop)
- Create and expand festivals and events around football games and other times that visitors are most likely in the area.
- Youth/indoor targeted facilities needed. Teen centers (activities that would appeal to this group), children's museum, etc. - Point is to ENABLE parents to spend money.
- May need 8000-10,000 seat multipurpose Civic Center to be used for staged events, consumer and trade shows, banquets and meetings.
- Evaluate fiber optics, broad band, etc. needs
- Review international visitor services? Are there translation needs.
- Additional golf courses may be considered
- Trolleys should be considered for towns for connectivity with attractions, shopping, dining and lodging.
- Agritourism
 - Land preservation efforts needed
 - Farmers Market (Christiansburg, Blacksburg) is beneficial
- Perception of parking shortage in downtown Blacksburg
- Lack of tourism related businesses. May need to do gap analysis. Clustering should be considered.
- Consider tourism zones



Event in Downtown Blacksburg

Focused Situational Analysis – Marketing

During a focused analysis on tourism marketing, the following observations and recommendations were determined:

- Need to establish brand, tagline, etc.
- Consider wedding destination promotional efforts
- Establish welcome Center- needs to be centrally located, easy access off I-81
- Consider establishing visitor information kiosks at other locations
- Improve customer service- educated staff relating to community, events, etc.
 - Talking points need for consistent message
 - Make brand widely known among especially, front-line staff

- Boy Scout Jamboree comes into the area every 4 years. Consider applicable promotion
- Consider including various transportation options into tourism marketing/resources
- Maximize public relations as a marketing tool, including targeting major television shows, magazines, etc.
- Develop county brochure of premier promotional piece
- Utilize Virginia Tourism Corporation’s Marketing Leverage Program to leverage funds
- Review cooperative tourism marketing opportunities/models for consideration
- Promote the New River Valley, in addition to Montgomery County
- Include history prominently in marketing. Include genealogy and other components
- Make “internal marketing” or marketing to local residents a key component of the marketing plan
- Carefully evaluate target audience and consider niche and expanded markets such as sports, outdoors, etc. and further out geographic markets
- Evaluate promotion opportunities through retail associations such as Virginia Bed and Breakfast Association, VA CVB, etc.
- Evaluate feasibility of a primary community calendar (web-based)
- Market through businesses and recreation centers. Possibly develop a toolkit for such partnership marketing opportunities
- Work with the NRV PDC to maximize the Explore NRV website and marketing initiative
- Promote friendly southern hospitality
- Emphasize that the area is a destination in marketing, a hub-base to support day trips into the larger area
- Promote local food opportunities in marketing
- Include scenery and outdoor recreation in marketing – mountains, river, fishing, boating, etc.
- Promote highlands connection (genealogy, family reunions, heritage)
- Partner with Virginia Tourism Corporation when possible to leverage marketing. For example, the LOVE letters campaign
- Visitors interested in packages (i.e. Drive-in movie circuit/film festival, arts festival- multiple dates/venues)
- Use of trip advisor, e-commerce, Google traveler



The Wilderness Trail Festival
Christiansburg

Focused Situational Analysis –Target Visitors

Also during the focused analysis on tourism marketing, the following observations and recommendations were determined when considering target visitors and markets:

- Determine feeder markets (who are they, where are they currently coming from when visiting our area?)
- Determine competitive set (what destinations do we compete with? On what do we compete?)
- Determine if and how we have the opportunity to stand out among comparable destinations such as technology? Thinks about VT and the CRC...what do people expect when they travel into the area?
- Friends and family (most people visiting VA coming to visit F&F) Where from? Who?
- Travelers in transit to other historical sites (Williamsburg, Jamestown)

- I-81 travelers (from where) (to where) (what would compel them to exit in Montgomery County?)
- Students and Parents of Virginia Tech and Radford University (develop ambassadors)
- Virginia Tech and Radford University alumni, students, and visitors
- Need demographic information on visitors (data and assets)
- Families
 - Outdoor recreation
 - Food/beverage Interests
 - Arts/culture
- Older Adults
 - Outdoor recreation (passive/low impact)
 - Food/beverage
- Young Adults
 - Outdoor recreation (active)
 - Food/beverage interests
 - State parks visitors
- Market to conference/meeting participants and their spouses
- Fill rooms during week (need periods, soft areas)
- Identify the need periods
- Middle income should be considered when looking at our year-round assets
- Focus on North Carolina and Virginia metropolitan areas
- Interstate travels should be targeted
- History aficionados
- Potential residents, such as young professionals, retirees, and seniors be potentially targeted
- Sports enthusiasts
- Outdoor enthusiasts
- Antiques/arts enthusiasts
- Current hotel guests (who are they, why are they here, where are they from?)
- Rail enthusiasts



The Lyric Theater,
Blacksburg

Focused Situational Analysis – Tourism Policy

In general, stakeholders felt that current policy and procedures of the county government are conducive to tourism development and growth. However, some observations and recommendations were made during the focused analysis on tourism policy:

- Tourism Director's role should include:
 - Branding for the destination
 - Networking with stakeholders, groups, and identify new ones (RTM, TCR, MCCC)
 - Facilitation of partnerships and cooperation. Promote business cooperatives (3 or more)

- Create a “County Trail” or promotional campaign of artisans, restaurants, museums, outdoor rec, directory of businesses etc.
- Educate entire community about assets, allowing them to be tourism ambassadors
- Bring businesses together on regular basis to educate, network, and share information. Be a resource.
- Work closely with Universities on scheduling events and promoting tourism in the area. Be a resource.
- Establish a Visitors Center
 - Easy access – exit 114/109
 - I 81 visibility
 - Tie to Heartwood (Abingdon) and state welcome centers
 - Possibility of private vendors, colocation or other creative means of revenue generation for purchase and/or lease and operation.
- MTDCs role
 - Advise director on priorities
 - Assist with networking and branding
 - Promote business cooperatives
 - Negotiations with key communication outlets to expand utilities such as: cell coverage and broadband thereby, supporting the connectivity today’s travelers expect (devices including smartphones and tablets).
- Regulations
 - Streamline government reviews and inspections
 - Reduce regulations that are burdensome at local governments
 - Make vacant buildings more attractive
 - Incentivize more downtown development
- Incentives
 - Consider tourism zones; review other locality models, etc.
 - Work toward commercial retail outlet center such as a Bass Pro Shop along I 81



Focused Situational Analysis –Education/Customer Service

During a focused analysis on education and customer service, the following general observations and recommendations were made by stakeholders:

- Consistent customer service training is needed. VTC program may be feasible.
- Establish a “Be a tourist in your own town” program, allowing citizens to become a student of all things Montgomery County. Teach them about the attractions, lodging, restaurants etc. Familiarization tours (FAMs) (Internal and External): just as we would have them for travel writers and potential clients, have them for front line staff. Welcome Centers would also participate.
- Participate in Career Day and other opportunities to educate K-12 on tourism benefits and career option.

- Have a central repository of visitor demographics. This would be a good resource for area businesses in addition to developing the tourism marketing plan.
- Stay current on technology. Mobile, QR codes etc...
- Educate on value of tourism to entire community. Share the tangible and intangible benefits. In addition to the direct tourism businesses, there is also the trickledown effect within small supporting businesses.
- Provide resources such as training, webinars, reference books to front line staff. Directory, maps, etc. should be considered:
 - County map of restaurants and hotels
 - Historic resources map
 - Provide resource book and educate business on its use.
- Educate on importance in property reinvestment. What are visitors looking for, what is likely to be successful, etc.?
- Incentives
 - Governing bodies to offer incentives significant enough to attract investors through tax breaks or matching grants
 - Sponsored tours of historical sites
- Use students in HTM, Business, and Communications program at the Universities to survey visitors (what do we need to know, where do we find the people to survey, how will we survey, and what will we do with the information?)
- Educate University students, parents and alumni to activities in the area that could result in additional night's stay.
 - Provide discounts (benefit) for staying an additional day.
- Short magazine with information, events and activities



Visioning

A sample of planning participant comments when asked to personally describe the tourism future of the area:

Tourism Mission & Vision

Mission Statement

The Tourism Mission Statement for Montgomery County is:

Stimulate economic opportunity and enhance the quality of life by the celebration and sharing of our culture, heritage and natural beauty through authentic experiences. We will promote our destination in a manner that fosters partnerships and sustainable growth.

Vision Statement

The Tourism Vision Statement for the Montgomery County is:

To be the premier mountain destination for travelers seeking unique recreational experiences in an area rich with natural resources, history, culture and vibrant communities.

“...Authentic...Eclectic...Vibrant...Organic...”

“...Southwest Virginia hub...”

“...Cool...Eclectic...Diverse”

“Virginia’s premier outdoor recreation and leisure destination...”

“Vibrant arts and culture center”

“Virginia’s Nature Capitol”



Blacksburg Farmers Market

Tourism Objectives, Measures, Targets, & Initiatives/Tasks

Following are the identified tourism strategic plan objectives and related implementation measures, targets, and initiatives/tasks as identified by the stakeholders group. Utilization of the identified measures, targets, and completion of the listed initiatives and tasks will result in significant progress toward each tourism goal and objective.

Goal 1

Improve Tourism Marketing

Objective 1.1

Implement a comprehensive tourism marketing plan to enhance and improve marketing efforts

Measure 1.1A

Develop and implement a research-based marketing plan

Target 1.1A

Plan developed and ready for implementation by September 1, 2013

Measure 1.1B

Establish branding, theme, logo, and identity

Target 1.1B

Completion and supported/approved usage of branding, logo, taglines, etc. by September 1, 2013

Objective 1.2

Develop an effective data collection and success measurement program for marketing

Measure 1.2

Conduct marketing research to determine how we are known, how visitors are learning about us, quality of their visit, etc.

Target 1.2

Determine feasible research approach and implement strategies and/or appropriate studies (by August 2013 and annually afterwards).

Responsible Individual(s) or Parties - Goal 1

Tourism Director and Montgomery Tourism Development Council (and/or marketing work group). Possibly use Virginia Tech, Radford University, or New River Community College students to assist as appropriate.

Initiative and Task Notes for Goal 1:

- Ensure marketing plan includes strategies that allow for the evaluation of current electronic marketing platforms, including various event calendars and a possible way to merge calendars into a master events calendar, or at minimum, reduce number and improve accuracy of current calendars
- Contract company for branding/logo by June 2013
- Contract company for website by June 2013, launch new site by September 1, 2013
- Develop integrated social media plan to include tourism Facebook page by September 2013
- Communication and coordination
- Focus on message and target audience
- Create a need or desire
- Develop applicable RFP's
- Consider applying for Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) matching funds, and utilize other appropriate VTC services. Utilize electronic marketing

Goal 2

Improve Tourism Infrastructure

Objective 2.1

Improve, coordinate, and communicate information about current tourism infrastructure

Measure 2.1A

Improve/develop visitor infrastructure including establishment of physical locations such as a state certified visitor's center, "kiosks" and other sites frequented by visitors such as town and county offices, Virginia Tech Visitors Center, libraries, lodging locations, chambers, retail establishments, etc.

Targets 2.1A

Complete analysis and prioritization of visitor and tourism infrastructure needs/opportunities and develop plan to address needs by priority by December 2013. Implement permanent visitor's center by February 2014.

Responsible Individual(s) or Parties 2.1A

Establish Infrastructure work group with Tourism Director's guidance and facilitation

Initiative and Task Notes 2.1A:

- Define what we want in a Kiosk (paper or electronic)
- Keep kiosks well maintained/stocked, possibly with volunteer citizens or business assistance. Businesses to keep their own stocked
- Establish applicable communication plan to education local businesses and organizations. Possible use government cable channels for all appropriate "internal" communication

Measure 2.1B

Develop marketing materials that assists visitors during planning and visit including mobile and electronic marketing tools and applications (including web-portals), comprehensive visitor's guide, paper resource maps, parking information, restroom locations, etc. by September 2013. Ensure that adequate and appropriate visitors resource information is available and ongoing at historical sites, visitors centers, etc.

Target 2.1B

Compile complete list of all marketing/resource materials, develop and distribute materials by December 2013

Responsible Individual(s) or Parties 2.1B

Marketing work group subcommittee (will need local representatives to assist with development). Engage VT, RU or NRCC marketing, communication and design students. Guidance provided by tourism director.

Initiative and Task Notes 2.1B:

- 8 ½ X11 inch map pad, printed in black and white that can be easily produced, highlighted, and torn off to hand to visitors from multiple locations. Three maps – Christiansburg, Blacksburg, and Montgomery County, either on same map, front

and back, or separate maps if needed, but all in same format. Frame map with local advertisers, localities. Include slogan, tagline, branding, website on maps, etc.

- Establish ongoing brochure fulfillment and monitoring schedule/system
- Survey current mobile application models to determine best approach and model for us.
- Send tourism information to Virginia Tech and Radford University Alumni clubs in other areas to promote longer stays during their visits for meetings, games, etc.

Measure 2.1C

Implement frontline ambassador program that includes education components, scripted talking points, familiarization tours, etc.

Target 2.1C

Program developed and ready for implementation by June 2014

Responsible Individual(s) or Parties 2.1C

Tourism Director, Outreach work group (business and community relations)

Initiative and Task Notes 2.1C

- Establish scripted/talking points
- Develop communication plan to reach business owners to inform them of the importance of equipping the front line ambassadors
- Develop education plan for ambassadors
- Distribute tools to appropriate front-line locations
- Consider providing frontline staff with a “Ask me about the NRV” button to encourage visitor discussion and inquiries
- Consider certification process with incentives for participants and businesses
- Identify key points where ambassadors are most important
- Hold quarterly orientation programs
- Focus on affordable, easily accessible means of education and orientation

Measure 2.1D

Develop and implement visitor’s signage and way finding plan

Target 2.1D

Plan development and implementation begun by July 2016

Responsible Individual(s) or Parties 2.1D

Tourism Director and Policy and Regulatory committee in tandem with Marketing committee.

Initiatives and Task Notes 2.1D

- Develop on ground signage plan, committee directed, with each jurisdiction planning department involved
- Develop funding plan, possibly with funding from each jurisdiction budget
- It will be key to coordinate through the county what is being done in towns and visa-versa. For example, the Huckleberry Trail has visitor way finding, parking, sites, restrooms, etc.
- Need to coordinate with current and proposed visitor “kiosk” locations

Goal 3

Develop and Cultivate Tourism Partnerships

Objective 3.1

Be a catalyst to facilitate stronger local, state, and regional partnerships, creating a synergy to support regional planning

Measure 3.1

Identify and prioritize potential partnership opportunities and current partnership activity level for each, determine opportunities and challenges, etc.

Target 3.1A

Identification and prioritization complete by December 2013

Measure 3.1B

Establish a plan/schedule to participate in meetings to develop/grow partnerships. Plan to include targeted number of partnerships to develop/grow in following four years, including hosting an annual meeting of key partners

Target 3.1B

Plan complete by February 2014.

Responsible Individual(s) or Parties 3.1

Tourism Director and Montgomery Tourism Development Council. Potential partners include but are not limited to Radford, Christiansburg, Virginia Tech, Radford University, `Round the Mountain, Crooked Road, Artisan Trails of Southwest Virginia, locality parks and recreation, area arts organizations, civic leagues, area DMOs, Virginia Tourism Corporation, lodging organizations, outdoor initiatives and organizations, Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation and other outlying areas

Objective 3.2

Encourage private and non-profit sector partnerships for cooperative marketing

Measure 3.2A

Identify and prioritize potential private and non-profit sector partnership opportunities and current partnerships. Determine opportunities and facilitate partnership development, facilitate appropriate co-branded ideas, and develop and implement communications tools and plan to connect diverse groups (possible electronic platform for communication in addition to Facebook, Twitter, wiki, online calendar, etc.).

Targets 3.2A

Identification and prioritization complete by December 2013

Establish plan/schedule to begin discussions and meetings to develop/grow partnerships by February 2014. Plan to include targeted number of partnerships to develop/grow in following four years

Responsible Individual(s) or Parties 3.2

Tourism Director and Montgomery Tourism Development Council. Potential partners include but are not limited to Downtown Blacksburg Inc., Blacksburg Partnership, Downtown Christiansburg Inc., Area event organizations, wineries, antique

stores/dealers, Virginia Tech Athletics, agri-tourism sector, sports marketing organizations etc.

Objective 3.3

Develop a marketable identity with partners for shared goals and interests

Measure 3.3A

Complete analysis of primary and secondary potential partnership marketing brands/identities to determine a clear identification of “who we are?”, to determine “how we locate ourselves?” or position in marketing, and “Who are our geographic partners:?” This partnership measure may dovetail with overall brand development efforts

Target 3.3A

Analysis with recommendations or plan for path forward by June 2014, with set targets for applicable feasible recommendations

Responsible Individual(s) or Parties 3.3A

Tourism Director, Montgomery Tourism Development Council

Measure 3.3B

Develop network of partners and individuals to coordinate events promotions, calendars, and coordination to increase tourism visitation

Target 3.3B

First meeting of group by July 1, 2013 finish project during FY 2014. Identify steps that need to be taken, software needed, etc. to coordinate electronic marketing events listing by July 2013.

Responsible Individual(s) or Parties 3.3B

Tourism Director, Marketing work group

Initiative and Task Notes – Goal 3

- Establish strong relationship with universities to increase visitation, as a tourism program resource, etc.
- Consider implementing “green” initiatives and incentives to complement tourism, quality of life, protect environment, etc.
- Develop “internal” or tourism industry calendar for tourism marketing and development meetings, workshops, etc.
- Form group of area marketing/PR directors to facilitate partnerships, concerted marketing, etc.
- Link New River Valley Hospitality Association with county tourism entity to work together on various efforts

Goal 4

Develop Tourism Education Programming and Advocacy

Objective 4.1

Increase customer service training through appropriate technologies (e.g. applications, QR codes, etc.)

Measure 4.1

Create certified training program for businesses and frontline staff

Targets 4.1

80% of employees of each business completing certification in order for business to be recognized as “premier” designation

Program in place by August, 2014

Responsible Individual(s) or Parties 4.1

Tourism Director, Outreach work group

Objective 4.2

Increase resident and front line staff awareness of tourism assets to increase knowledge, pride, and establish advocacy

Measure 4.2

Create a local ambassador program for citizens and any/all organizations, businesses, etc.

Target 4.2

By June, 2014

Responsible Individual(s) or Parties 4.2

Tourism Director, Outreach work group

Initiative and Task Notes – Goal 4

- Local recognition of program, successes, etc. relayed through advocacy PR campaign (ongoing)
- Consider recognizing “tourism person of the year”, “business of the year” to be celebrated at a National Tourism Week event(s) etc.
- Work with schools (public and private) to educate children on area which would be carried into homes, encourage tourism careers, entrepreneurship, etc.
- Build stronger relationships in designing information to go out to citizens (all modes)
- Partner to host events to create awareness of area, tourism, etc. (See Kasey for example)
- Create modular program to be incorporated into grade levels K-12 (by January 2015)
- Frontline training course/materials should include customer service, history, familiarization, branding information, link to tourism calendars, etc. Should be a tested course and certification
- Consider establishing benefits such as premier advertising on county tourism website, etc. for “premier” designated businesses
- Work with local media to recognize “best customer service” staff ongoing
- Ongoing speaking engagements through establishing a speaker’s bureau focused on tourism
- Implement a plan to deliver the program

Goal 5

Enable the growth of tourism in Montgomery County through a strong program and policy

Objective 5.1

Evaluate, improve and continue the process of creating policy and procedures for the tourism program

Measure 5.1A

Review occupancy tax rates, in competitive set, to ensure consistency and competitiveness, as well as other applicable funding opportunities such as meals tax and advertising revenue

Target 5.1A

Complete analysis with recommendations reported by June 2014

Measure 5.1B

Enlist hotels, restaurants, etc. to help develop strategies to increase visitation, expenditures, etc. through potential policy and program changes

Target 5.1B

Establish groups and set meetings by July 2014

Measure 5.1C

Develop advocacy campaign to educate citizens regarding the positive impact of tourism, inform elected officials of the positive tax benefits of tourism, etc.

Target 5.1C

Campaign developed and implemented by January 2015

Measure 5.1D

Determine and consider any local and state incentives or zoning that can be done to facilitate tourism growth

Target 5.1D

Analysis complete and reported by December 2014. Plan to implement all endorsed actions implemented by December 2014

Responsible Individual(s) or Parties – Goal 5

Tourism Director, Montgomery Tourism Development Council and Policy and Regulatory work group.

Initiative and Task Notes – Goal 5

- Consider hotels, groups, etc. when reviewing tax rates
- Consider comp rooms for sports group officials, group leaders, etc.
- Secure and disseminate tax rate information from surrounding localities
- Encourage regional government conversations about tourism and working together
- Consider the possibility of a membership program for private sector to leverage funding, marketing, etc.

Conclusion

Representatives of Montgomery County and the Towns within continue to recognize the significance of tourism through its positive economic impact and related contributions to the quality of life for Montgomery County residents. The significant steps and various efforts taken prior to the development of this plan is evidence of that commitment. This plan is intended to build upon those past accomplishments and propel future success.

Local government support and stakeholder participation will continue to be extremely important in order for this plan to be implemented successfully. Officials and staff from Montgomery County will need to take an ongoing leadership role in overseeing implementation. Continued involvement, assistance, and input from various town officials, tourism organizations, businesses, civic groups, other interested citizens, and the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, will be crucial.

To encourage progress toward the established targets, this plan should be reviewed by the locality officials and the tourism task force consistently. Upon each review, any adjustments that need to be made to this plan can be discussed. Once a majority of the targets within this plan have been met, an updated plan should be developed.

Using this plan as guidance, Montgomery County and the Towns within are expected to continue positive progress toward the development and promotion of tourism. It is imperative that the plan be referenced consistently as any new tourism-related discussions occur and as all applicable decisions are made. While new ideas and recommendations can be considered in the future, officials should reference this plan and determine if implementing any new ideas and recommendations is feasible and in accordance with this plan. This document will also serve as a reference piece for the tourism department in future staffing related to growth, tourism entrepreneurs and businesses considering locating or expanding within Montgomery County, and should be available at local economic development offices and other appropriate distribution locations and websites.



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Appendix

Performance Measures

Quick Reference Chronological Summary

Insert once all measures are finalized

Estimated Economic Impact

The following economic impact estimates and data for Montgomery County are a result of studies conducted by the Research Department of the U.S. Travel Association for the Virginia Tourism Corporation to estimate the domestic travelers' spending estimates

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Percent Change
Travel Economic Impacts						
Employment	1,184	1,226	1,220	1,213	1,241	2.29%
Expenditures	\$ 104,706,355	\$ 111,192,107	\$ 105,112,455	\$ 111,742,268	\$ 121,873,393	9.07%
Local Tax Receipts	\$ 1,925,405	\$ 2,064,055	\$ 1,973,478	\$ 2,046,244	\$ 2,127,657	3.98%
Payroll	\$ 19,603,470	\$ 20,738,387	\$ 20,735,526	\$ 21,360,794	\$ 22,382,987	4.79%
State Tax Receipts	\$ 4,696,071	\$ 4,867,014	\$ 4,916,728	\$ 5,071,157	\$ 5,279,977	4.12%
Local Excise Tax Rates						
Admissions Excise Tax Rate	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	n/a
Food Service Excise Tax Rate	4 %	4 %	4 %	4 %	4 %	n/a
Lodging Excise Tax Rate	3 %	3 %	3 %	3 %	3 %	n/a
Local Excise Tax Collection						
Admissions Excise Tax Collected	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	n/a
Food Service Excise Tax Collected	\$ 7,090,319	\$ 7,522,006	\$ 8,209,549	\$ 8,270,213	\$ 9,512,952	15.03%
Lodging Excise Tax Collected	\$ 1,455,681	\$ 1,598,419	\$ 1,560,979	\$ 1,577,290	\$ 1,780,070	12.86%

Notes:

Lodging Excise Tax Collected -- Montgomery Co. - \$36,966; Blacksburg (town) - \$930,773; Christianburg (town) - \$812,331

Food Service Excise Tax Collected -- Montgomery Co. - \$201,167; Blacksburg (town) - \$3,903,787; Christianburg (town) - \$5,407,998

Terms & Definitions

Goals: Broad statement of measurable outcomes to be achieved on behalf of customers

Initiatives/Tasks: Specific programs, strategies, and activities that will help you meet your performance targets

Measures: Meaningful indicators that assess progress towards accomplishment of goals and objectives

Mission Statement: Statement of purpose; fundamental reason for the tourism effort existence

Objective: Statements of what you must do well or barriers that you must overcome to achieve a specific goal

Opportunities: Factors or situations that exist beyond your organization that may have a favorable effect on it

Strengths: Resources or capabilities that can be used to accomplish your mission

Target: The numerical value of the performance measure you hope to achieve

Target Customers/Tourists: Any person, group, or organization that is believed to have an interest in utilizing your tourism related product(s) and/or service(s)

Threats: Factors or situations that exist beyond your organization that can negatively affect it

Tourism Assets: Any tourism related product, attraction, site, or event that is of interest to target customers/tourists

Vision Statement: A word picture of the future that the organization/tourism effort intends ultimately to become or to influence

Weaknesses: Deficiencies in resources or capabilities that hinder your ability to be successful

Premier: First in position, rank, or importance.

Visitor Profile

New River Valley Visitor Profile Report

Source: VA Module of TNS Travels America, FY 2011

Household trips 50+ miles, one-way, away from home including day trips or with one or more nights away from home to Blacksburg, Roanoke, Salem, Radford, Pulaski, Blue Ridge Parkway, Claytor Lake State Park or New River Trail State Park during FY 2011

Cells shaded in red indicate a sample size of less than 300. These data should be used with caution.

	All
Sample Size (N)	259
Weighted Percent of Total	100% (n=253.85)
Primary purpose of Trip	
Visit friends/relatives	46%
Outdoor recreation	7%
Entertainment/Sightseeing	12%
Other pleasure/personal	12%
Personal business	9%
Business - General	9%
Business - Convention/tradeshow	less than 0.5%
Business - Conference/seminar	3%
Other	2%
All purposes of trip	
Q1A Visit friends/relatives - All purposes for trip	53%
Q1A Outdoor recreation - All purposes for trip	16%
Q1A Entertainment/Sightseeing - All purposes for trip	19%
Q1A Other pleasure/personal - All purposes for trip	24%
Q1A Personal business - All purposes for trip	12%
Q1A Business - General - All purposes for trip	12%
Month of Travel	
Wave 61 - July 2010	10%
Wave 62 - August 2010	11%

Wave 63 - September 2010	5%
Wave 64 - October 2010	10%
Wave 65 - November 2010	12%
Wave 66 - December 2010	8%
Wave 67 - January 2011	7%
Wave 68 - February 2011	6%
Wave 69 - March 2011	7%
Wave 70 - April 2011	6%
Wave 71 - May 2011	8%
Wave 72 - June 2011	9%
Holiday Travel	
VA1_1. Did your ... trip to Virginia include a holiday or a holiday weekend?	23%
Weekend Getaway	
VA2_1. Did this trip include a Friday night and/or a Saturday night in Virginia?	62%
Total Travel Party Size	
1	26%
2	43%
3	14%
4	11%
5	2%
6+	3%
Mean:	2.7
Median:	2
Age of Travel Party Members	
VA5_1_1. How many people, including yourself, were in your travel party in each of the following age groups ... trip? - Under 6 years	5%
VA5_2_1. How many people, including yourself, were in your travel party in each of the following age groups ... trip? - 6 - 12	6%
VA5_3_1. How many people, including yourself, were in your travel party in each of the following age groups ... trip? - 13 - 17	7%
VA5_4_1. How many people, including yourself, were in your travel party in each of the following age groups ... trip? - 18 - 24	7%

VA5_5_1. How many people, including yourself, were in your travel party in each of the following age groups ... trip? - 25 - 34	17%
VA5_6_1. How many people, including yourself, were in your travel party in each of the following age groups ... trip? - 35 - 44	15%
VA5_7_1. How many people, including yourself, were in your travel party in each of the following age groups ... trip? - 45 - 54	14%
VA5_8_1. How many people, including yourself, were in your travel party in each of the following age groups ... trip? - 55 - 64	19%
VA5_9_1. How many people, including yourself, were in your travel party in each of the following age groups ... trip? - 65 and over	10%
Travel Party Members Under 18 Years Old	
Travel parties that include children under 18	22%
Modes of Travel Used on Entire Trip (all states visited)	
Q2A Own Auto/truck - All modes of transportation for trip	86%
Q2A Rental car- All modes of transportation for trip	6%
Q2A Camper/RV- All modes of transportation for trip	1%
Q2A Ship/Boat- All modes of transportation for trip	less than 0.5%
Q2A Airplane- All modes of transportation for trip	8%
Q2A Bus - All modes of transportation for trip	2%
Q2A Train - All modes of transportation for trip	1%
Q2A Motorcoach/Group Tour - All modes of transportation for trip	
Q2A Other - All modes of transportation for trip	3%
Primary Mode of Travel Used on Entire Trip	
Own Auto/truck	84%
Rental car	4%
Ship/Boat	less than 0.5%
Airplane	6%
Bus	1%
Train	1%

Motorcycle	less than 0.5%
Other	2%
Total Nights Spent on Entire Trip	
0	21%
1	14%
2	20%
3	13%
4	7%
5	8%
6	4%
7	3%
8 to 13	8%
14+	2%
Mean:	3.2
Median:	2
Total Number of Nights at Lodging used Anywhere in Virginia	
1	31%
2	24%
3	13%
4	8%
5+	24%
Mean:	3.3
Median:	2
Types of Lodging Used Anywhere in Virginia	
Q4F Number of nights spent in Hotel/Motel	43%
Q4F Number of nights spent in B&B	1%
Q4F Number of nights spent in Private Home	45%
Q4F Number of nights spent in Condo	2%
Q4F Number of nights spent in Time Share	1%
Q4F Number of nights spent in RV/Tent	3%
Q4F Number of nights spent in Other	6%
Mean:	0
Median:	
Top 15 Brands of Hotel Stayed in Longest in Virginia	
Other	12%
Comfort Inns/Suites	11%
Hampton Inns/Suites	11%
Holiday Inn	10%

Holiday Inn Express	8%	
Wyndham Hotels & Resorts	5%	
Sheraton Inns/Hotels/Resorts/Suites	4%	
Super 8 Hotels	4%	
Best Western	4%	
Sleep Inn & Suites	3%	
Red Roof Hotels/Resorts	3%	
Days Inn	3%	
Homewood Suites	3%	
Quality Inn & Suites	2%	
Hilton Hotels & Resorts	2%	
Travel Party Spending		
	\$0	7%
	\$1 to less than \$100	31%
	\$100 to less than \$250	22%
	\$250 to less than \$500	22%
	\$500 to less than \$750	7%
	\$750 to less than \$1,000	5%
	\$1000+	5%
	Mean:	330.9
	Median:	150
Traveler Spending in Virginia (Percentage of Total Spending By Category)		
Q4G Total \$s spent on Transportation (excluding parking/tolls)	6%	
Q4G Total \$s spent on Parking/Tolls	5%	
Q4G Total \$s spent on Lodging	9%	
Q4G Total \$s spent on Food/Beverage/Dining (excluding groceries)	23%	
Q4G Total \$s spent on Groceries	11%	
Q4G Total \$s spent on Entertainment (excluding gaming)/Admissions	7%	
Q4G Total \$s spent on (Casino) Gaming	less than 0.5%	
Q4G Total \$s spent on Shopping/Gifts/Souvenirs	10%	
Q4G Total \$s spent on Amenities (golf fees, spa, health club, ski passes, etc.)	1%	
Q4G Total \$s spent on Other	2%	
Q4G Total \$s spent on Gasoline	26%	
General Activities / Attractions Visited in Virginia		

Arts & Culture	
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Art galleries	5%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Historic sites/churches	10%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Museums	10%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Musical theater	2%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Old homes/mansions	6%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Symphony/opera/concert	less than 0.5%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Theater/drama	2%
Adventure Sports	
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Hanggliding/skydiving	
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Hiking/backpacking	4%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Rock/mountain climbing	less than 0.5%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Scuba diving/snorkeling	less than 0.5%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Skiing/snowboarding (cross country or downhill)	less than 0.5%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Water skiing	
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Whitewater rafting/kayaking	
Sports & Recreation	
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Biking	2%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Fishing (Fresh/saltwater)	1%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Golf	1%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Horseback riding	1%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Hunting	
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Major sports event	2%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Motor boat/Jet Ski	
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Motor sports - NASCAR/Indy	
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Sailing	

Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Snowmobiling	
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Snow sports other than skiing or snowmobiling	
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Tennis	
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Youth/amateur/collegiate sporting events	3%
Nature / Outdoor Activities	
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Beach	4%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Bird watching	2%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Camping	2%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Caverns	2%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Gardens	2%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Nature travel/ecotouring	2%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - State/National Park	12%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Wildlife viewing	7%
Entertainment / Amusement	
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Casino/gaming	1%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Fine dining	7%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Nightclub/dancing	4%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Shopping	12%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Spa/health club	1%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Special events/Festivals (e.g., Mardi Gras, hot air balloon)	1%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Theme park	2%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Wine tasting/winery tour	3%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Zoos	1%
Family Activities	
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Family reunion	2%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - High School/College reunion	1%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Visiting friends	18%

Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Visiting relatives	28%
Sightseeing	
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Rural sightseeing	19%
Q4H Activities/Attractions Visited - Urban sightseeing	8%
Top 25 Most Frequently Visited Cities in Virginia	
Roanoke	45%
Blacksburg	24%
Richmond	14%
Salem	13%
Lynchburg	12%
Wytheville	12%
Charlottesville	11%
Harrisonburg	11%
Washington, DC	11%
Bedford	10%
Front Royal	9%
Cumberland Gap	9%
Alexandria	9%
Staunton	9%
Williamsburg	8%
Virginia Beach	8%
Fairfax	8%
Big Stone Gap	8%
Lexington	8%
Arlington	8%
Norfolk	7%
Galax	7%
Bristol	7%
Manassas	6%
Danville	6%
Top 25 Virginia Attractions Most Frequently Visited by Travelers	
Blue Ridge Parkway (Blue Ridge Highlands)	33%
Blue Ridge Parkway (Shenandoah Valley)	21%
Appalachian Trail (Heart of Appalachia)	12%
Blue Ridge Parkway (Northern Virginia)	11%
Blue Ridge Parkway (Central Virginia)	10%
Appalachian Trail (Blue Ridge Highlands)	8%

Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel (Eastern Shore)	7%
Appalachian Trail (Northern Virginia)	7%
Skyline Drive (Shenandoah Valley)	7%
Smith Mountain Lake (Blue Ridge Highlands)	6%
Skyline Drive (Northern Virginia)	6%
Shenandoah National Park (Shenandoah Valley)	6%
Appalachian Trail (Central Virginia)	5%
Mount Vernon (Northern Virginia)	5%
Natural Bridge / Natural Bridge Caverns (Shenandoah Valley)	5%
Appalachian Trail (Shenandoah Valley)	5%
The Crooked Road – Virginia's Heritage Music Trail (Blue Ridge Highlands)	5%
Civil War Trail (Heart of Appalachia)	4%
Prime Outlets – Williamsburg (Hampton Roads)	4%
The Crooked Road – Virginia's Heritage Music Trail(Heart of Appalachia)	4%
Claytor Lake State Park (Blue Ridge Highlands)	4%
Colonial Williamsburg (Hampton Roads)	4%
Tyson's Corner Mall (Northern Virginia)	4%
Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge (Eastern Shore)	4%
Cumberland Gap National Historical Park (Heart of Appalachia)	4%
Satisfaction With Experience in Virginia	
Not at all satisfied	1%
Not very satisfied	less than 0.5%
Somewhat satisfied	11%
Very satisfied	37%
Extremely satisfied	51%
Advance Planning Time - Considered Visiting Virginia	
Less than 2 weeks before the visit	33%
Within 2 weeks - 4 weeks of visit	15%
At least 1 month, but less than 3 months before the visit	21%
At least 3 months, but less than 6 months before the visit	11%
At least 6 months, but less than 1 year before the visit	11%
More than a year before the visit	8%

Advance Planning Time - Decided to Visit Virginia	
Less than 2 weeks before the visit	44%
Within 2 weeks - 4 weeks of visit	16%
At least 1 month, but less than 3 months before the visit	18%
At least 3 months, but less than 6 months before the visit	9%
At least 6 months, but less than 1 year before the visit	7%
More than a year before the visit	6%
Planning Information Sources for Virginia	
Offline Sources	
Friends/relatives	20%
Own experience	29%
Travel agent (in person or by phone)	1%
Travel club (eg. AAA)	4%
Travel book	6%
Newspaper	less than 0.5%
Magazine	1%
TV	1%
Radio	2%
Destination printed material	4%
Travel provider (airline, hotel, rental car cruise, etc.) either in person or by phone	
Other offline planning sources	2%
Online Sources	
Corporate travel department (in person or by phone)	1%
Corporate desktop travel tool/intranet	1%
Online full service travel website (Expedia, Travelocity, etc.)	3%
Traditional travel agency website (American Express, Carlson Wagonlit, etc.)	1%
Travel provider website (airline, hotel, rental car, cruise, tour)	8%
Other online planning sources	1%
Destination website	9%
MySpace	less than 0.5%
Facebook	4%
LinkedIn	
Match.com	

Twitter.com	1%
Blogs	1%
TripAdvisor	2%
Yahoo Trip Planner	
VibeAgent	
Other social/commercial networking sources (Specify)	
iPhone	3%
Mobile Web Browsing	1%
Other mobile sites	
Other	
Someone else planned for me and I don't know the method	10%
No plans were made for this destination	31%
Booking Methods Used for Virginia	
Offline Methods	
Travel agent (in person or by phone)	1%
Directly with travel provider (airline, hotel, rental car, cruise, etc.) either in person/phone	5%
Travel club (e.g. AAA)	3%
Corporate travel department (in person or by phone)	2%
Directly with destination or attraction (tourist/visitor center, etc.) in person or by phone	6%
Some other offline booking method	2%
Online Methods	
Corporate desktop travel tool/internet	2%
Travel provider website (airline, hotel, rental car, cruise, tour)	7%
Destination website (official site of state, city or attraction)	4%
Online full service travel website (Expedia, Travelocity, etc.)	3%
Traditional travel agency website (American Express, Carlson Wagonlit, etc.)	1%
Some other online booking method	1%
Other	
Someone else booked for me and I don't know the method	10%
No bookings were made for this destination	60%
Top 10 Other States Visited for Leisure in Past 12	

Months	
North Carolina	39%
Florida	23%
South Carolina	21%
Pennsylvania	18%
Washington D.C	17%
West Virginia	13%
Maryland	13%
New York	12%
Georgia	11%
Tennessee	11%
Travel Party Origin - Top 10 DMAs (Designated Marketing Areas) for the profiled travel segment	
ROANOKE-LYNCHBURG	20%
RICHMOND-PETERSBURG	11%
WASHINGTON, DC (HAGERSTOWN)	11%
GREENSBORO-HIGH POINT-WINSTON SALEM	6%
NORFOLK-PORTSMOUTH-NEWPORT NEWS	5%
NEW YORK	4%
MYRTLE BEACH- FLORENCE	3%
TAMPA-ST. PETERSBURG (SARASOTA)	3%
CHARLOTTE	3%
BLUEFIELD-BECKLEY-OAK HILL	2%
Travel Party Origin - Top 10 States for the profiled travel segment	
Virginia	50%
North Carolina	11%
Florida	6%
Maryland	5%
South Carolina	4%
Pennsylvania	3%
New York	3%
New Jersey	2%
Tennessee	2%
Georgia	2%
Ethnicity of Household Head	
No Answer	1%
White	91%
Black/African-American	5%
Asian or Pacific Islander	2%

Other	1%
Hispanic Origin of Household Head	
No Answer	4%
Spanish/Hispanic	4%
Not Spanish/Hispanic	93%
Household Size	
1	21%
2	44%
3	18%
4	9%
5	6%
6	1%
More than 6	less than 0.5%
Age of Household Head	
18-24	7%
25-34	23%
35-44	18%
45-54	16%
55-64	25%
65+	11%
Mean:	45.8
Marital Status	
Now married	60%
Never married	25%
Divorced, Widowed, Separated	15%
Education of Male Household Head	
No answer	1%
Grade School	1%
Some high school	4%
Graduated High school	12%
Some college - no degree	21%
Graduated college-Associate's degree (2 year)	9%
Graduated college-Bachelor's degree (4 year)	23%
Post Graduate degree- MS,MA,MBA,DVM,PhD,DDS,etc.	29%
Education of Female Household Head	

No answer	less than 0.5%
Some high school	2%
Graduated High school	19%
Some college - no degree	22%
Graduated college-Associate's degree (2 year)	8%
Graduated college-Bachelor's degree (4 year)	30%
Post Graduate degree- MS,MA,MBA,DVM,PhD,DDS,etc.	18%
Annual Household Income	
Under \$7,500	2%
\$7,500-\$9,999	2%
\$10,000-\$12,499	less than 0.5%
\$12,500-\$14,999	2%
\$15,000-\$17,499	2%
\$17,500-\$19,999	3%
\$20,000-\$22,499	3%
\$22,500-\$24,999	less than 0.5%
\$25,000-\$27,499	3%
\$27,500-\$29,999	1%
\$30,000-\$32,499	3%
\$32,500-\$34,999	3%
\$35,000-\$37,499	4%
\$37,500-\$39,999	3%
\$40,000-\$42,499	3%
\$42,500-\$44,999	2%
\$45,000-\$47,499	2%
\$47,500-\$49,999	3%
\$50,000-\$54,999	7%
\$55,000-\$59,999	2%
\$60,000-\$64,999	5%
\$65,000-\$69,999	5%
\$70,000-\$74,999	3%
\$75,000-\$79,999	3%
\$80,000-\$84,999	2%
\$85,000-\$89,999	2%
\$90,000-\$94,999	3%
\$95,000-\$99,999	8%
\$100,000-\$124,999	8%
\$125,000-\$149,999	7%
\$150,000-\$174,999	1%
\$175,000-\$199,999	2%
\$300,000+	less than 0.5%

Travel Attitudes: Percent that feel each comment 'Describes Them Perfectly'	
My life just keeps getting busier and busier	22%
I love to relive my travel experiences by discussing them with other people	20%
I often read packs and websites to find out more about products and services that I'm buying	20%
I'm a real label reader. I won't buy anything without reading the small print	17%
I love shopping in markets and small specialist stores	16%
When I find a new travel destination or tourism operator that I really like I have to tell others all about it	14%
I frequently adapt products I've bought to suit my own tastes and needs	14%
My family and friends often ask my advice on travel matters	12%
I frequently search magazines and websites for information about travel destinations and tourism operators I'm interested in	11%
I love in-store demonstrations of new products and services - I just can't walk past them	10%
The ethics of travel and tourism companies has a big influence on what operators I use	9%
I buy environmentally friendly products and services whenever possible	9%
I love hunting out the newest travel experiences before anyone else catches on to them	9%
I admire imaginative travel brands that do things differently to others	9%
I rarely seem to have time to do the things that are really important to me in my life	8%
Anything that saves me time is worth paying extra for	8%
My choice of brands is important - I believe that what I buy says something about who I am	7%
I make a genuine effort to support travel and tourism companies that put something back into the community	7%

I am prepared to pay more to visit places or use operators that offer something really original	7%
I often go out of my way to find travel and tourism operators that offer really genuine, authentic experiences	6%
Most Recent Trip to Virginia	
2000 or earlier	
2001	
2002	
2003	
2004	
2005	
2006	
2007	
2008	7%
2009	
2010	46%
2011	46%
2012	
Top 15 States Visited on Same Trip	
Virginia	63%
North Carolina	6%
West Virginia	4%
South Carolina	4%
Maryland	4%
Pennsylvania	3%
Georgia	3%
Washington D.C	2%
Tennessee	2%
Florida	2%
Kentucky	1%
Delaware	1%
New York	1%
New Jersey	1%
Missouri	1%
Top 10 Other States Plan to Visit for Leisure in Next 2 Years	
Virginia	10%
Florida	8%
North Carolina	8%

South Carolina	6%
Washington D.C	5%
New York	5%
Pennsylvania	4%
California	4%
None	3%
Tennessee	3%

Markets & Assets

Assets lend themselves to Certain Markets (Additions in bold; Regional assets in italics; Links added when possible)

Local & Regional Assets	Athletics & Recreation	Nature & Outdoor Recreation	Heritage & History	Arts & Culture	Leisure & Shopping	Group Meetings
Athletics and Recreation (Sport Tourism)						
Adventure World Skate and Fun Center	•				•	
Ball fields and Facilities	•	•			•	
Batting Cages	•				•	
Burrows Burleson Tennis Center	•				•	
Christiansburg Aquatic Center	•				•	
Christiansburg Skate Park	•				•	
Crimper's Climbing Gym	•				•	
Driving Ranges		•			•	
Frog Pond	•	•			•	
Golden Hills Golf Course	•	•			•	
Golf Courses	•	•			•	
Harkrader Sports Complex	•	•				
NRV SuperBowl	•				•	•
Pete Dye Golf Course	•	•				
Recreation Centers	•				•	
Skate Parks (Christiansburg & Blacksburg)	•				•	
University Sports	•					
Pulaski County Mariners	•					
Nature & Outdoor Adventures (Eco-Tourism)						
Blacksburg Price House Nature Center		•			•	
Bottom Creek Gorge Preserve		•				
Caldwell Fields (Forest Service)		•				
Camp Alta Mons		•	•			•
Hahn Horticulture Gardens		•				
Hiking & Other Trails	•	•	•		•	

Huckleberry Trail		•	•	•
NRV Junction		•		•
Pandapas Pond Day Use Area		•		•
Pedlar Hills Natural Area Preserve		•		
Trans-American Trail('76 Bicentennial Trail)		•		
VT Geo-Science Museum		•		
<i>Appalachian Trail</i>		•		
<i>Blue Ridge Parkway</i>		•	•	
<i>Claytor Lake</i>	•	•		•
<i>Jefferson National Forest</i>		•		

Markets & Assets

Assets lend themselves to Certain Markets (Additions in bold; Regional assets in italics; Links added when possible)

Local & Regional Assets	Athletics & Recreation	Nature & Outdoor Recreation	Heritage & History	Arts & Culture	Leisure & Shopping	Group Meetings
Nature & Outdoor Adventures (Eco-Tourism)						
<i>Mountain Lake Wilderness Area (War Spur Trail)</i>		•	•			
<i>New River</i>						
<i>New River Trail State Park</i>		•	•			
<i>Rails to Trails: Virginia Creeper Trail</i>		•	•		•	
<i>The Cascades</i>		•			•	
Historical & Heritage Attractions and Sites (Heritage Tourism)						
<i>Coal Mining Heritage Park</i>		•	•		•	
Historic Cambria			•		•	
Historic Districts						
<i>Meadowbrook Center</i>			•	•	•	•
<i>Montgomery Museum and Lewis Miller Regional Art Center</i>			•	•	•	
Railroad Sites (Historic Christiansburg Station/Cambria Depot, Montgomery Tunnel Pulaski Station, Raymond F. Ratcliffe Memorial Transportation Museum)			•	•	•	
Schaeffer Memorial Church & the Hill School			•			
<i>Smithfield Plantation</i>			•		•	
<i>St. Luke and Oddfellows Hall</i>			•			
<i>The Black House</i>			•			
<i>The Christiansburg Institute</i>			•			
<i>Audie Murphy Memorial</i>		•	•	•		
<i>Covered Bridges (Giles County)</i>						

Farms, Critters, and Vinyards (Agri-Tourism)						
3-Bird Berry Farm						•
Catawba Valley (North Fork Rural Historic District)						• •
Farmers' Markets (Blacksburg, Christiansburg)						• •
Horse Barns / Shows						•
Kentland Farm						•
Lavender Farm at Beliveau						•
Sinkland Farms						•
South Fork Valley (Shawsville/ Elliston/ Lafayette)						• •
<i>Apiaries (Honey)</i>						•
<i>Christmas Tree Farms</i>						• •
<i>Mushroom Hunting</i>						•
<i>Orchards</i>						•
<i>Trout Farm</i>						•

Markets & Assets

Assets lend themselves to Certain Markets (Additions in bold; Regional assets in italics; Links added when possible)

Local & Regional Assets	Athletics & Recreation	Nature & Outdoor Recreation	Heritage & History	Arts & Culture	Leisure & Shopping	Group Meetings
Festivals & Events (Other than Foodie stuff)						
Blacksburg Summer Solstice Festival				•	•	
Christmas in Cambria				•	•	
Depot Day: National Train Day Festival				•	•	
EastMont Tomato Festival				•	•	
Garden Tours				•	•	
Heritage Day				•	•	
Lavender Festival at Beliveau				•	•	
Prices Fork Fair				•	•	
Rock the Blocks Music and Arts Festival				•	•	
Steppin' Out				•	•	
Virginia Tech Summer Arts Festival				•	•	
Wilderness Trail Festival				•	•	
By-Ways (Scenic Tourism)						
<i>Catawba Valley (Rt 785) (76 Trail)</i>		•	•	•	•	
<i>Mount Tabor/Catawba (Rt 624)</i>		•	•	•	•	

<i>North Fork Valley (Route 603 --Ellett to I-8•)</i>			•	•	•	•
<i>Route 8 (Christiansburg to Floyd)</i>			•	•	•	•
<i>South Fork Valley (460)</i>			•	•	•	•
<i>South Fork Valley (Alleghany Springs (Route 637/Route 653))</i>			•	•	•	•
Unclassified Stuff						
Town Parks (Caboose Park)		•	•			•
Yellow Sulpher Springs Healing Spa				•		•
Accommodations						
Bed & Breakfasts / Inns						
B &B Coop (serve/sell local foods)						•
Maison Beliveau Estates						•
The Oaks Victorian Inn				•		•
The Inn at Hans Meadow				•		•
Conventions & Group Meetings						
The Inn at Virginia Tech						•
CrossPointe Conference Center						•
University Potential Conference Space in Summer						•
SELU (Radford Univeristy Facility in Montgomery Co.)						•
Prices Fork Grange						•

Past Tourism Efforts

- NRV Tourism & Arts study from the mid-1980s. It grew out of the same group that started Depot Days in 1985 (including the New River Arts Council--now defunct). Ed Schwartz may still have some information on this.
- Festivals to include (since Steppin' Out was included in timeline):
- Prices Fork Fair started in 1866
- Wilderness Trail Days started in 1973
- Depot Day started in 1985
- Heritage Festival (check with the Montgomery Museum for start date)
- Regional Fairs and Events: Floydfest and others, the NRV Fair, Newport Fair
- Development of the Coal Mining Heritage Park @ Merrimac was the first of four planned "themed" parks to be scattered around the county, designed to celebrate the County's Heritage (which accounts for the name). Proposal included significant tourism aspects, which were later reflected in the 2005 Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan (see also tourism strategies already adopted in the County Plan):

Excerpts from Montgomery County, 2025 (Comprehensive Plan): Cultural Resources Chapter

§CRS 1.3 CRS 1.3 Historic Preservation and Tourism. Actively encourage the development of economic enterprises which maintain or enhance the historic nature of existing districts, including the development of tourism-based industries (bed and breakfasts, antique shops, gift shops, and attractions) and tourism corridor plans (eg. an antiques corridor along Rt. 11/460 or a Coal Mining Heritage Corridor). (6)

§CRS 3.2 Heritage Parks & Trails System. Continue to develop the of Heritage Parks and Trails System to connect public, nonprofit, and private heritage and cultural sites or nodes (Coal Mining Heritage Park at Merrimac and the Farm Heritage Park at Riner), while providing venues for local cultural events (Coal Mining Heritage Day, Riner Heritage Day, etc.), artisans (an artisans' market), and performers (small performance and demonstration facilities) celebrating elements of Montgomery County's heritage. (8)

CRS 3.2.1 Coal Mining Heritage Park. Continue to implement the master plan for the Coal Mining Heritage Park, in partnership with the Coal Mining Heritage Association and other interested individuals and organizations.

CRS 3.2.2 Riner Branch, Montgomery County Museum. Develop, through a public private partnership, the Riner Branch of the Montgomery County Museum, including the cannery and the cabin located on the Auburn High School grounds, immediately south of Auburn High School.

CRS 3.2.3 Farm Heritage Park. Create a master plan for the development of a Farm Heritage Park in Riner, in partnership with Radford University, Virginia Tech, the Friends of Riner, Montgomery County Museum, agricultural and farm organization, and the Agricultural Extension Service.

Economic Resources Chapter

Education

EDU 2.2 Nontraditional Educational Facilities. Continue to develop nontraditional educational facilities (such as the Coal Mining Heritage Park and Science Center, the Farming Heritage Park, the Christiansburg Institute, Blacksburg's Heritage Community Park and Natural Area, and the Montgomery County Museum) to provide expanded educational opportunities through public/private partnerships.

EDU 2.2.1 Coal Mining Heritage Park Educational Facilities . Continue to develop the historic and scientific educational facilities and programs in the Coal Mining Heritage Park, (8)

EDU 2.2.2 Farming Heritage Park Educational Facilities: Develop the historic and agricultural educational facilities at a Farming Heritage Park, including the establishment of facilities and programs supporting agricultural extension, 4-H, and Future Farmers of America.

EDU 2.2.3 Christiansburg Institute and Christiansburg Community Center. Support the development of alternative educational and museum facilities and programs at the Christiansburg Institute and Christiansburg Community Center (original Christiansburg Institute), focusing, specifically, on the needs of minority communities in Montgomery County. (9)

EDU 2.2.4 Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library. Provide continuing support for the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library, including the development of new facilities, the revitalization of existing facilities, and the expansion of the technical infrastructure in support of adult educational opportunities. (10)