

FY 2023-2024
ONWARD NRV
ANNUAL REPORT



ONWARD NRV

MISSION & VISION



Onward NRV is a public/private, regional economic development organization whose mission is to attract and retain world class jobs, investment, and talent in Virginia's New River Valley. It's a movement where leaders from business, government, and higher education work together to promote the economic vitality of the region.

Onward NRV is always striving to move the region forward. It is an organization that gets things done. This is embodied in the action-oriented name and branding of our organization. The movement of the red arrow in our logo is symbolic of Onward NRV, which pulls people and ideas together to move the region forward. Leaders in business, government, and higher education have a role to play in economic development. We're here to help them **Join the Movement.**

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGY

To drive economic success in Virginia's New River Valley, Onward NRV is implementing a five-year economic development strategy, Onward 2028. This strategy adopts a modern, holistic approach that targets four interconnected goals: (1) Talent, (2) Business, (3) Marketing, and (4) Regionalism. FY 2023-24 marked the first year of this ongoing five-year plan. As you review the annual report, you'll see substantial progress across all four areas of Onward 2028.



TALENT



BUSINESS



MARKETING



REGIONALISM

ONWARD
2028



REGIONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

FY 2023-24



COMPANY	JOB	INVESTMENT	INDUSTRY	LOCATION
Camrett Logistics	58	\$2,150,000	Warehouse & Distribution	Pulaski County
ESS Technologies	27	\$1,600,000	Manufacturing	Montgomery County
Great Wilderness Brewing Company	10	\$1,000,000	Food & Beverage Processing	Pulaski County
TOTALS	95	\$4,750,000		

GOAL 1

TALENT



ATTRACT AND RETAIN TALENT TO SUPPORT REGIONAL GROWTH



ELEVATE NRV

In April 2024, Onward debuted their inaugural talent event, Elevate NRV. This event empowered local employers with insights from industry leaders and experts in talent recruitment and retention. Attendees took part in breakout sessions and heard from keynote speaker and local author Melody Warnick. Elevate NRV promises to be a powerful resource in the talent retention arena that will impact and elevate Virginia's New River Valley for years to come.



CAREER FAIRS

As part of Onward's strategy to retain talent in the NRV, staff attended K-12 and collegiate career fairs to highlight the benefits of living and working in the region to students. In FY 2023-24, these included Career and Technical Education high school career fairs in Pulaski County and Giles County, as well as higher education career fairs at Radford University, New River Community College and Virginia Tech.



YOUNG, SMART, & LOCAL

In November 2023, Onward attended the Young, Smart, & Local (YSL) conference in New Orleans. YSL is a network of more than 50 cities working to build diverse, young talent through engagement, inclusion and retention of college students and young professionals. Onward NRV was able to attend sessions that provided insight on how to retain the talent coming out of the NRV's higher education institutions.



DIGITAL TALENT CAMPAIGNS



Manufacturing Jobs Digital Marketing Campaigns

Onward conducted campaigns in October 2023 and May 2024 to promote manufacturing jobs in the NRV region to adults within a 3-hour drive across all social media platforms and YouTube. These promotions achieved over 1 million impressions, reached more than 582,000 people, and resulted in 4,693 website visits to TheNRV.org/MFG webpage.



Tech Jobs Digital Marketing Campaigns

In November 2023 and April 2024, Onward ran digital marketing campaigns to showcase job opportunities within the NRV's tech sector across all social media platforms and YouTube. The campaigns collectively garnered over 1 million impressions, reached over 696,000 people and received 3,523 visits to the TheNRV.org/techjobs webpage.



Livability Digital Marketing Campaign

Onward ran a livability campaign from the end of FY 2023-24 to the beginning portion of FY 2024-25. This campaign communicated the benefits of living in the region to professionals looking for a high quality of life through the use of Onward's newly released "Find Your Place in Virginia's New River Valley" videos. The campaign had over 455,000 total impressions, reached 424,000 people and resulted in 5,587 website visits to TheNRV.org/live-here webpage.



NRV EXPERIENCE

LEVEL UP YOUR INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

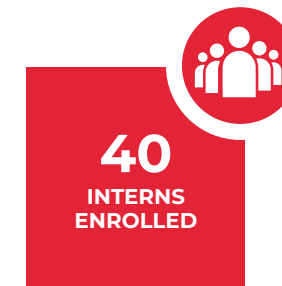
NRV Experience Celebrates 5 Years

The NRV Experience initiative was created in 2020 to support employers' summer internship programs and increase the number of young professionals living and working in the NRV post-graduation.

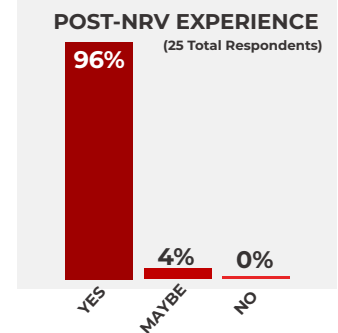
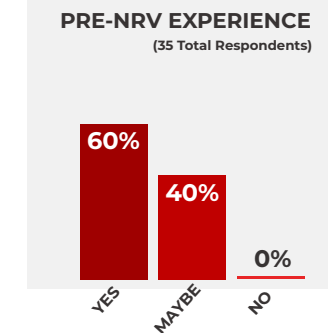
This program allows interns to discover if Virginia's New River Valley is a natural fit for them through community excursions, professional development sessions, and opportunities to connect with other interns and the region.

This year, fourteen NRV employers enrolled 40 of their college interns to participate in the fifth cohort of the NRV Experience. Each week, the interns explored the NRV through excursions highlighting one of the five unique communities in Virginia's New River Valley. Onward collaborated with local tourism directors and economic development directors from each community to showcase the region's amenities to the interns. Throughout the program, interns attended professional development sessions covering communication; mental wellness; volunteering; teamwork and critical thinking; and diversity, equity, and inclusion. These sessions were taught by educators and professionals from around the region.

2024 NRV EXPERIENCE DASHBOARD



INTERN SURVEY: WOULD YOU CONSIDER WORKING IN THE NRV AFTER GRADUATION?



GOAL 2

BUSINESS

ATTRACT AND GROW BUSINESS TO STIMULATE NEW JOBS AND INVESTMENT

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LEAD GENERATION & MARKETING ENGAGEMENTS

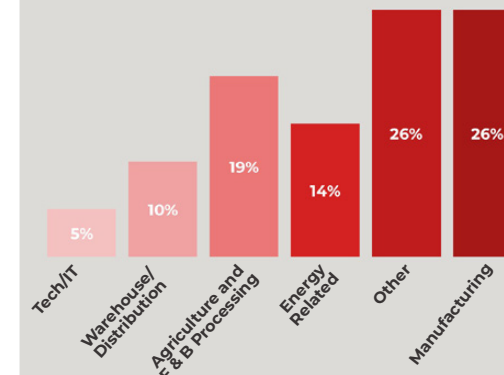
6

PROSPECT VISITS

22

NEW PROSPECTS

PROSPECTS BY INDUSTRY



INDUSTRY LEADERS' SUMMITS

Onward hosts Manufacturing Leaders' and Technology Leaders' Summits twice a year to help support existing industry competitiveness. The Manufacturing Leaders' Summits were held in October 2023 and May 2024. The Technology Leaders' Summits were hosted in October 2023 and April 2024. These summits create a forum to engage industry leaders and encourage collaboration around shared challenges and opportunities.



2024 SELECTUSA SUMMIT

In late June, Onward sponsored a booth promoting Virginia's New River Valley at the 10th Annual SelectUSA Investment Summit. Senior Director of Business Engagement Samantha Livesay was joined by local economic developers from across the region to staff the booth and promote the NRV to international companies attending the Summit. The Summit, hosted by the U.S. Department of Commerce, is the premier event dedicated to promoting foreign direct investment in the United States and encourages international business to expand in the US.



AUVSI XPONENTIAL 2024

Onward exhibited at AUVSI Xponential 2024 as part of the Virginia Pavilion sponsored by the Virginia Unmanned Systems Center at VIPC. This year's Xponential was hosted in San Diego from April 22nd - 25th. Executive Director Katie Boswell attended the event on behalf of Onward. Participating in Xponential is one of the ways that Onward attracts new businesses and supports existing businesses in the growing uncrewed systems industry in Virginia's New River Valley.

CULTIVATE NEW BUSINESS



SITE SELECTORS GUILD 2024 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Executive Director Katie Boswell attended the Site Selectors Guild Annual Conference from April 3-5, 2024, in Nashville. The event was filled with insights from site selectors and opportunities to network with economic developers from across the country. Boswell represented the NRV and engaged directly with site selectors to promote the region, ask questions about current trends, and build relationships.



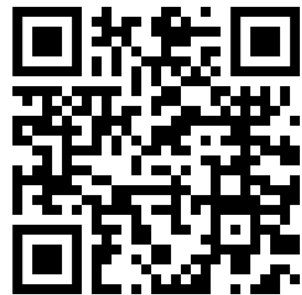
2024 CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SHOW (CES)

In collaboration with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, Onward NRV attended CES 2024 from January 9th - 11th in Las Vegas. This trip was executed to market the Commonwealth of Virginia and Virginia's New River Valley to prospective technology businesses. CES is the only trade show that showcases the entire tech landscape at one event. There were more than 4,300 exhibitors and 135,000 attendees this year.

GOAL 3

MARKETING

MARKET THE NRV AS A COMPETITIVE DESTINATION FOR TALENT & COMPANIES



Onward Releases New Livability Videos

Onward released a series of livability videos in Summer 2024. The main video, "Find Your Place in Virginia's New River Valley", and its companion videos, "Live Like a Local in Virginia's New River Valley", and a variety of reels, were created to show what a day in the life of a young professional looks like in the NRV. Scan the QR code to watch the new video, "Find Your Place in Virginia's New River Valley". To view the results of the Livability Campaign utilizing these videos, see page 6.

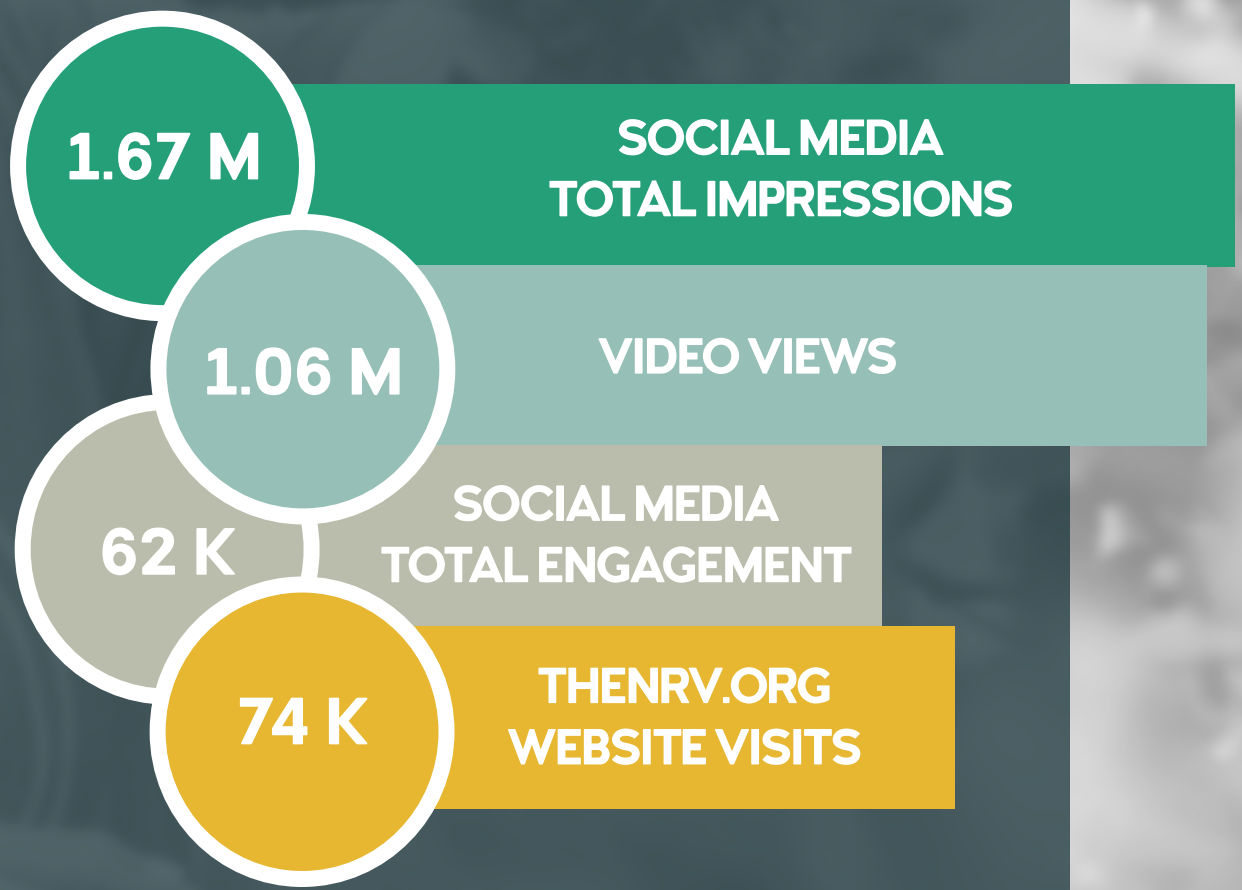
800+
STICKERS
DISTRIBUTED

Onward Spreads Brand Awareness

One of Onward's 2028 goals is to create a brand ambassador program. This initiative focuses on making the Virginia's New River Valley brand known in the region by supplying merchandise out to the various communities in the NRV. Onward was able to promote the NRV through career fairs and sticker drop-offs throughout the localities.



REGIONAL BRANDING DASHBOARD





STRENGTHEN THE CONNECTEDNESS OF THE REGION



MEDIA MENTIONS



PRESENTATIONS ABOUT ONWARD TO COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS



COMMUNITY EVENTS ATTENDED



ONWARD JOINS FORCES WITH REGIONAL PARTNERS ON THE FUTURE OF TALENT SUMMIT

Partnering with the Greater Roanoke Workforce Development Board, Roanoke Regional Partnership, Roanoke - Blacksburg Technology Council, Roanoke College, Virginia Tech, Radford University, and other higher education institutions, Onward Talent Strategies Coordinator Max Davenport helped to produce the Future of Talent Summit held at Roanoke College in March 2024.



ONWARD A PART OF REGIONAL CONSORTIUM AWARDED FEDERAL TECH HUB GRANT

Onward joined the multi-regional partnership of over 50 organizations that received a Strategy Development Grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration Tech Hubs program. Virginia's AM² Tech Hub is dedicated to advancing additive manufacturing and advanced materials in the New River Valley and Southern Virginia regions. Learn more about the effort at am2virginia.org.



ONWARD IN THE MEDIA

Various media outlets recognized Onward NRV as thought leaders on the NRV. The organization was featured in the *Roanoke Times* for their Onward 2028 fundraising campaign results, a *Virginia Business* article on the growth of manufacturing in the region, a *Business Facilities* article about the expansion of ESS Technologies, and a *Virginia Business* article about the ESS Technologies' expansion. Additionally, Onward Staff were guests on the Work Talk Podcast discussing regional collaboration for economic development and WRAD Radio's NRV Business Spotlight program.



I-81 CORRIDOR GROUP VISITS GREENVILLE SITE SELECTORS

Onward traveled to Greenville, South Carolina as part of the I-81 Corridor Marketing Group, a multi-regional collaboration with the Roanoke Regional Partnership, the Shenandoah Valley Partnership, and the Economic Coalition of the Northern Shenandoah Valley. The purpose of the trip was to market both the I-81 Corridor and the four individual regions to site selectors in the Greenville area.



ONWARD JOINS PANEL DISCUSSION ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Katie Boswell, Executive Director of Onward NRV, participated as a panelist for the Economic Development discussion hosted by the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce's Eggs & Issues program. The event brought together local experts to discuss economic growth in the NRV. During the discussion, Katie addressed workforce dynamics and strategies for business recruitment.

ORGANIZATION

INVESTOR EVENTS

2023 Annual Dinner

The 2023 Annual Investor Appreciation and Awards Dinner was held at the Inn at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg on September 14, 2023. The event featured a networking reception, a buffet dinner, an awards ceremony, and a keynote address from Virginia Economic Development Partnership President and CEO, Jason El Koubi.

Winter Investor Luncheon

The Winter Luncheon was held at New River Community College in Pulaski County on December 14, 2023. A panel of leaders from across the New River Valley gave the investors the chance to hear about the state of each of their localities.

Spring Investor Reception

The Spring Investor Reception was held on March 14, 2024, at Selu Conservancy at Radford University. Radford University's Director of Economic Development, Charlie Jewell presented the findings of the university's 2022 Economic Impact Study.

Summer Investor Reception

Onward released their new livability video on June 13, 2024, at the Eighty-Four in Floyd County. Speaker Haden Polseno-Henlsey, co-owner of Red Rooster Coffee, spoke about the benefits of having a business in Floyd and the steps they have taken to provide childcare for their employees.

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ONWARD NRV INVESTORS

ONWARD NRV STAFF



Katie Boswell,
Executive Director



Samantha Livesay,
Senior Director of
Business Engagement



Rachel Johnson,
Marketing Manager



Max Davenport,
Talent Strategies
Coordinator

OUR INVESTORS

Thank you to all of the organizations that make the work of Onward NRV possible!

CHAIRMAN



PRESIDENT



DIRECTOR



For a complete list of our investors, please visit www.OnwardNRV.org/Our-Investors.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BOARD MEMBERS FY 2023-24

- Brian Alexander** | IV Labs
- David Bennett** | Appalachian Power
- Keith Boyd** | Hurt & Proffitt
- Mindy Boyd** | Goodwill Industries of the Valley
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- John Gardner** | Branch Builds
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- Vince Hatcher** | Hollingsworth & Vose
- Brian Hicks** | Celanese Corporation
- Nathan Hockersmith** | Atlantic Union Bank
- Marty Holliday** | Floyd County EDA
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- Carie Kingery** | Freedom First Credit Union
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- Kim Repass** | City of Radford
- Scott Ross** | Salem Stone Corporation
- Mark Rowh** | New River Community College
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- Wayne Whitlock** | 1901 Group
- Abram Williams** | City of Radford EDA
- Randy Wingfield** | Town of Christiansburg
- Mark Woolwine** | Brown Edwards

Ex-Officio
Jim Cowan, General Counsel | CowanPerry PC

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FY 2023-24

- Mark Woolwine, Chair** | Brown Edwards
- Lauren Dudley, Vice Chair** | HCA LewisGale Hospital Montgomery
- April DeMotts, Treasurer** | Montgomery County
- Cora Gnegy, Secretary** | Giles County
- Keith Boyd** | Hurt & Proffitt
- Rodney Fultz** | Carilion NRV Medical Center
- Brian Hicks** | Celanese Corporation
- Linda Millsaps** | Floyd County
- Kim Repass** | City of Radford
- Laura Walters** | Pulaski County
- Wayne Whitlock** | 1901 Group



www.OnwardNRV.org

2020 Kraft Drive, Suite 2000
Blacksburg, VA 24060

info@onwardnrv.org | 540-267-0007

