

**FY 2024-2025**

# **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 2024-25 marked the second year of this ongoing five-year strategic plan. As you review the annual report, you'll see significant progress across all four areas of Onward 2028.



**TALENT**



**BUSINESS**



**MARKETING**



**REGIONALISM**

**ONWARD  
2028**



# REGIONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

## FY 2024-25



### THE PATTON LOGISTICS GROUP TO CONSTRUCT NEW DISTRIBUTION AND WAREHOUSE FACILITY IN PULASKI COUNTY

In 2025, The Patton Logistics Group announced a \$10 million investment to build a new 100,000-square-foot distribution and warehouse facility in Pulaski County, creating 25 new jobs. This marks the company's second expansion in the New River Valley in just four years. Patton first established operations in the region in 2020 with a 250,000-square-foot logistics center, followed by a 100,000-square-foot expansion and new trucking operations center in 2021. The company's steady growth underscores the NRV's strategic advantages and strong support for business expansion.

### LUNA LABS ADDS JOBS IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Luna Labs expanded its team by adding eight new jobs at its Blacksburg, Virginia location. This growth reflects the company's continued success and commitment to innovation in the New River Valley. The expansion highlights the NRV's strength as a hub for high-tech talent and research-driven companies.



## GOAL 1

## TALENT



ATTRACT AND RETAIN  
TALENT TO SUPPORT  
REGIONAL GROWTH



### SECOND ANNUAL ELEVATE NRV

Onward NRV held its second annual Elevate NRV talent micro conference on October 28th, 2024, at the Inn at Virginia Tech, uniting local HR professionals to focus on talent recruitment and retention. The half-day event offered a space for employers to learn effective practices and build stronger workplace cultures.



### LOCAL CAREER FAIRS

In FY 2024-25, Onward staff attended high school career fairs in Floyd, Giles, and Pulaski Counties, and college fairs at Radford University, NRCC, and Virginia Tech. These efforts supported Onward's talent strategy by promoting the benefits of living and working in the NRV to students.



### NRV TALENT TOURS PILOT

Onward NRV launched the NRV Talent Tours program in Pulaski County. Students in grades 9-12 explored careers in logistics and agribusiness with a visit to Patton Logistics and Red Sun Farms. The program connects classroom learning to real-world job skills and local opportunities.



### YOUNG, SMART, & LOCAL

Talent Strategies Coordinator Max Davenport presented the NRV Experience internship program during a breakout session at the Young, Smart, and Local Conference in Philadelphia. During the conference, Max was also selected to represent the NRV on the national podcast "DCI Talent Wars".





# DIGITAL TALENT CAMPAIGNS



## Metallica Digital Marketing Campaign

Onward NRV ran a digital campaign to coincide with Metallica's historic concert at Virginia Tech to reconnect with Northern Virginia Hokie alumni. Running May 5–9, it used lifestyle videos to drive traffic to the “Live Here” page and remind viewers that the NRV offers more than memories - it offers a future. The campaign reached over 279,000 people, earned 8,857 engagements, 179,902 video views, and 2,022 website visits.



## Manufacturing Jobs Digital Marketing Campaigns

In October, Onward NRV launched a digital marketing campaign promoting advanced manufacturing careers to adults and college students within a 3–5 hour drive. The campaign featured Facebook and YouTube ads and directed viewers to TheNRV.org/MFG. It exceeded expectations with over 159,000 people reached, 44,000 engagements, 142,000 video views, and 1,386 website visits.



## Tech Jobs Digital Marketing Campaigns

In May, Onward NRV conducted a digital marketing campaign to promote tech jobs in Virginia's New River Valley, targeting professionals in tech-heavy cities. The campaign highlighted the region's growing tech industry, scenic beauty, and relaxed lifestyle through videos like “Tech in the NRV” and “The NRV is IT.” It reached over 143,000 people, with 42,000 engagements, 69,000 video views, and 1,362 visits to TheNRV.org/techjobs. The campaign supports Onward's long-term strategy to attract and retain tech talent in the region.

Photo By Metallica



# NRV EXPERIENCE

## LEVEL UP YOUR INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

### 2025 NRV Experience

Launched in 2020, the NRV Experience was developed to strengthen local internship programs and encourage more young professionals to build their futures in Virginia's New River Valley after graduation.

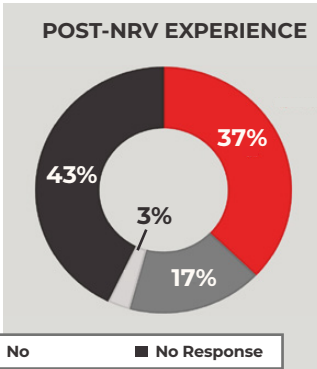
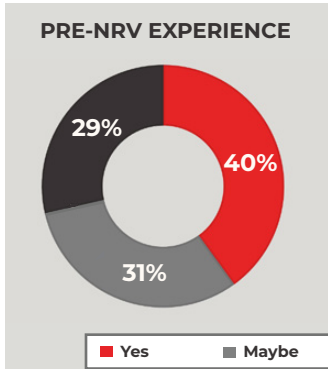
The initiative gives college interns the chance to explore the region through hands-on experiences, career-building workshops, and networking opportunities to connect with peers and the broader NRV community.

In 2025, fourteen employers from across the NRV enrolled a total of 35 interns in the program's sixth cohort. Each week, participants visited one of the region's five distinct communities, with support from local tourism and economic development leaders who helped highlight key features and amenities. Interns also took part in a series of professional development workshops led by regional educators and industry experts, covering topics like emotional intelligence, time management, conflict resolution, LinkedIn best practices, change & resilience, and networking.

## 2025 NRV EXPERIENCE DASHBOARD



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



■ Yes ■ Maybe ■ No ■ No Response



## GOAL 2

## BUSINESS

ATTRACT AND GROW  
BUSINESS TO STIMULATE NEW  
JOBS AND INVESTMENTFY 2024-25  
PROSPECT DASHBOARD

7

LEAD GENERATION &  
MARKETING ENGAGEMENTS

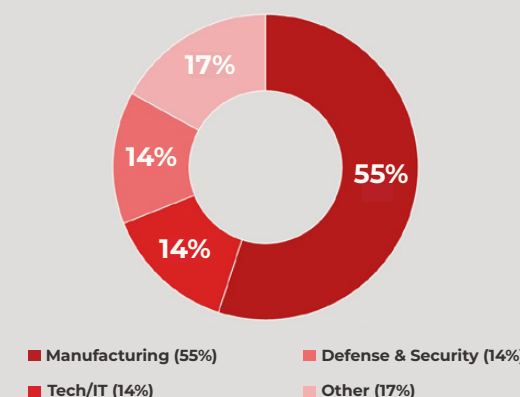
6

PROSPECT  
VISITS

29

## NEW PROSPECTS

## PROSPECTS BY INDUSTRY



## EXISTING BUSINESS

INDUSTRY LEADERS'  
SUMMITS

Onward NRV hosted its semiannual Tech/IT and Manufacturing Leaders' Summits in October 2024 and April 2025. Tech summits covered topics from talent development to leadership and business transitions. Manufacturing summits at Oransi and Spectrum Brands featured discussions on additive manufacturing, GO TEC training, and innovation. These events strengthen the region's tech and manufacturing sectors by connecting industry leaders and fostering collaboration.

ONWARD CO-HOSTS  
KNOWLEDGE WORK  
CONSORTIUM WITH VEDP

The Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) joined with Onward NRV to host a round table discussion about the Knowledge Work ecosystem in Virginia's New River Valley at the Highlander Hotel in Radford on October 16, 2024. The round-table brought together a variety of industry, higher education, and public sector leaders from the region to tackle some of the more challenging issues facing the Knowledge Work industry in the New River Valley.

## SITES &amp; BUILDINGS

ONWARD NRV  
SHOWCASES SITES TO  
VEDP REAL ESTATE  
SOLUTIONS TEAM

On November 6th and 7th 2024, Onward NRV and local economic development partners had the privilege of hosting members of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership Real Estate Solutions team for a two-day tour of Virginia's New River Valley. The event highlighted the region's prime real estate options available for businesses looking to grow and succeed in the region.



## CULTIVATE NEW BUSINESS

LEAD GENERATION  
MARKETING TRIPS

As part of Onward NRV's strategic plan to attract new jobs and investment, the team engaged in targeted lead generation marketing trips to promote the region. In FY 24-25, the team attended the PLMA Private Label Trade Show in Chicago, the WorkTruck Show in Indianapolis, and the SelectUSA Investment Summit in Washington, D.C. Onward also participated in an Advanced Materials Virtual Call Trip focused on the Philadelphia market.

SITE CONSULTANT  
ENGAGEMENT OUTREACH

In FY 24-25, Onward NRV worked to strengthen relationships with site consultants to enhance the visibility of Virginia's New River Valley as a competitive business location. Onward attended a SSG virtual table talk with NRV local economic development organizations (LEDOs), connected with site selectors in Atlanta with the I-81 Corridor Marketing Group, and partnered with the LEDOs at the Virginia Consultants' Forum in Tysons, Virginia.

# GOAL 3

## MARKETING

### MARKET THE NRV AS A COMPETITIVE DESTINATION FOR TALENT & COMPANIES



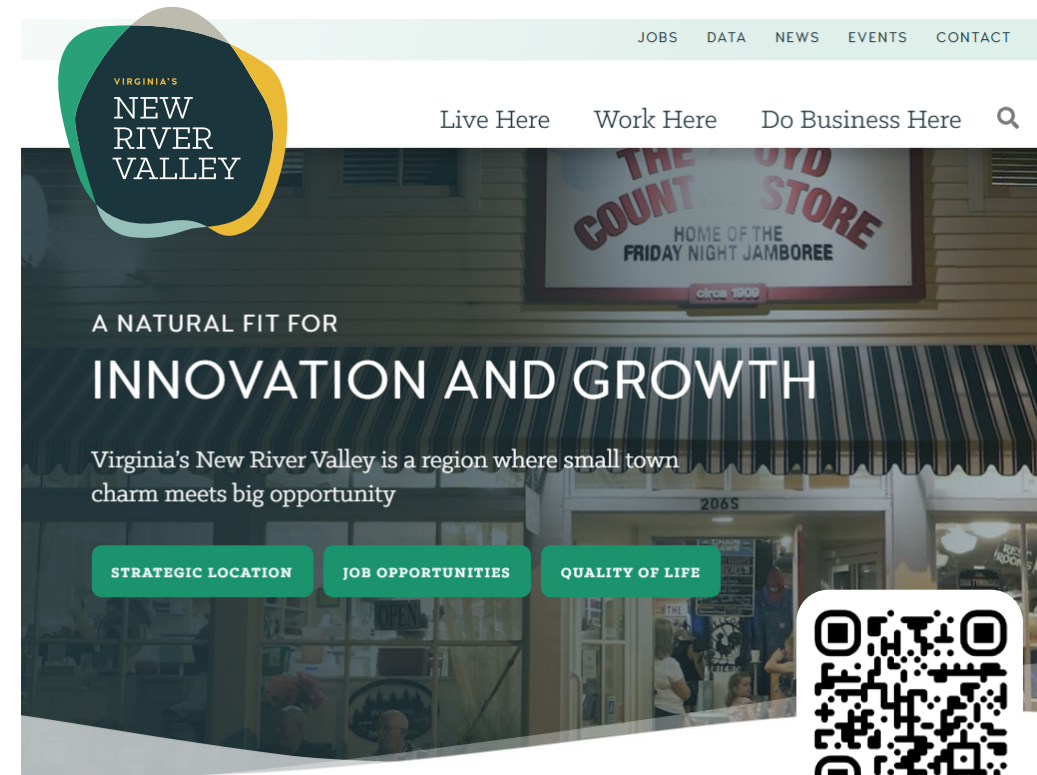
#### ONWARD RELEASES TALENT INITIATIVE BROCHURES

Onward NRV was proud to release four talent initiative brochures that showcase the targeted industries in Virginia's New River Valley. The brochures are used to attract and retain talent in the region at K-12 and collegiate career fairs. Each brochure draws attention to the unique opportunities to work and live in the NRV, highlighting specific companies that call the NRV home. The back side of all the brochures display the livability of the Virginia's New River Valley by taking students on a virtual tour of each locality in the NRV using QR codes.



#### ONWARD RECEIVES GOLD VIDDY AWARD

Onward New River Valley was thrilled to share that they have been recognized with the Gold Viddy award for their latest livability video, "Find Your Place in Virginia's New River Valley." This accolade speaks to Onward's ongoing commitment to marketing Virginia's New River Valley as a competitive destination for talent and businesses. The Viddy Awards are administered and judged by the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals, emphasizing excellence in video content creation.



#### ONWARD NRV LAUNCHES REDESIGNED REGIONAL WEBSITE

During FY 24-25, Onward partnered with Richmond-based Whittington Consulting to redesign and modernize the region's website, TheNRV.org. Originally launched in 2017, the site was due for a full refresh to better meet the needs of today's users. This year-long project created a more mobile-responsive and user-friendly platform. The redesigned site streamlines content and improves navigation, resulting in a more intuitive experience.

The updated website also showcases the unique livability of Virginia's New River Valley with imagery of the region's mountains and the New River. New page layouts include clear calls to action and easy-to-follow paths, helping users quickly locate information about living, working, and doing business in the NRV. With improved functionality and a refreshed design, TheNRV.org now serves as a dynamic and engaging digital front door for the region.

## FY 2024-25 REGIONAL BRANDING DASHBOARD

941 K

SOCIAL MEDIA TOTAL IMPRESSIONS

608 K

VIDEO VIEWS

73 K

WEBSITE VISITS

1300+

DISTRIBUTED PIECES OF NRV MERCHANDISE



## GOAL 4

## REGIONALISM

STRENGTHEN THE  
CONNECTEDNESS OF  
THE REGION

## REGIONAL DASHBOARD

20

MEDIA  
MENTIONS

5

PRESENTATIONS  
ABOUT ONWARD  
TO COMMUNITY  
ORGANIZATIONS

12

COMMUNITY  
EVENTS  
ATTENDED**ONWARD HOSTS MULTI-REGIONAL TALENT SUMMIT AT RADFORD UNIVERSITY**

Onward NRV hosted the second annual Future of Talent Summit at Radford University on March 13, 2025, with partners the Roanoke Regional Partnership, the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board, the Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council, and the Virginia Talent + Opportunity + Partnership (VTOP). The event featured keynotes that focused on using workforce data to inform strategy, an employer panel discussion, and a Strategic Doing workshop.

**ONWARD SUPPORTS VIRGINIA'S AM² TECH HUB**

Onward NRV continued serving on the Virginia's Additive Manufacturing and Advanced Materials (AM²) Tech Hub steering committee in FY 2024-25 alongside partners from the NRV Regional Commission, Virginia Tech, and the Southern Virginia Regional Alliance. AM² activities included All-Hands meetings at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research, Virginia Tech, and IperionX, as well as efforts to secure GO Virginia funding to expand the GO TEC program into NRV middle schools.

**ONWARD ISSUES PRESS RELEASE ABOUT NRV ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Onward issued a press release highlighting the region's strong economic performance, as detailed in the State of the Commonwealth report by Old Dominion University. Virginia's New River Valley ranked as the second-fastest growing economy in Virginia in 2023, with GDP growth outpacing both the state and national averages. The announcement gained wide media attention, appearing in *The Roanoke Times*, *The Patriot*, *NRV News*, *RBTC Newsletter*, and *Valley Business Front*. It inspired follow-up articles in *Valley Business Front* and *Virginia Business* magazine.

**ONWARD NRV  
IN THE NEWS****ONWARD IN THE MEDIA**

Onward NRV was recognized by various media outlets for its leadership in regional economic development. The organization was featured in *The Roanoke Times* for bringing the GO TEC mobile lab to the region, in a *Virginia Business* article about the Year in Review for the New River Valley and Roanoke Valleys, and in *Cardinal News* for its role in Project VITAL. Additional features included the *Virginia Maritime Bulletin*, *Alpharetta-Roswell Herald*, *SEDC Winter Newsletter*, *The Magazine* at Radford University, and multiple publications covering the Patton Logistics expansion in Pulaski County.

**ONWARD ASSISTS WITH NRV LIVABILITY EVENT**

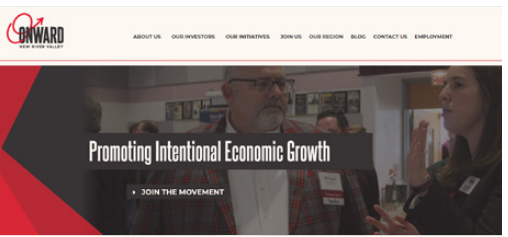
Executive Director of Onward NRV Katie Boswell served on the NRV Livability Exchange planning committee and helped organize the 2025 annual event that showcases important work and collaborative partnerships across the region. During the event, Talent Strategies Coordinator Max Davenport presented on the NRV Experience and how it connects young professionals with the region's unique culture and supports talent retention and workforce development in the New River Valley.

# ORGANIZATION



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ONWARD NRV INVESTORS



Cultivating & Growing Economic Success in Virginia's New River Valley

## ONWARD EVENTS

### 2024 Annual Dinner

Date: September 12, 2024  
Attendees: 143  
Speaker: Dr. David Ayares, President and Chief Scientific Officer of Revivicor

### Winter Investor Luncheon

Date: December 12, 2024  
Attendees: 77  
Speaker: Dr. Luke Liska  
Topic: Using AI in Business

### Spring Investor Breakfast

Date: March 20, 2025  
Registered Attendees: 57  
Speaker: Deputy Secretary of Commerce and Trade, Maggie Beal  
Topic: Exclusive Insights on Virginia's Economic Future

### Summer Investor Reception

Date: June 12, 2025  
Registered Attendees: 55  
Speaker: Holly Kobia  
Topic: Building Resilience for the Road Ahead

## ONWARD AWARDED COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR

Onward is proud to have received the Community Service Organization of the Year award from the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce at their 2024 Annual Meeting & Awards Dinner. This award celebrates Onward's dedication to strengthening the local community. In addition, two of Onward NRV's staff received individual nominations for their outstanding contributions. Katie Boswell, Executive Director, was nominated as Distinguished Non-profit Leader of the Year. Samantha Livesay, Senior Director of Engagement, was nominated as Community Service Individual of the Year.

## ONWARD RELEASES UPDATED ORGANIZATION WEBSITE

Onward undertook a full website redesign of their organization's website during FY 24-25, led by Director of Marketing, Rachel Johnson. The project aimed to improve mobile responsiveness, better reflect the organization's mission, and offer investors a clear view of Onward's impact across the region. New sections such as "Our Initiatives" and "Resources" were added to highlight key programs and provide year-round insight into Onward's work. The updated site supports Onward's commitment to regional advancement and collaboration, serving as both a strategic communication tool and a reflection of the organization's forward-thinking vision.

# 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](http://www.OnwardNRV.org/Our-Investors).

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## BOARD MEMBERS FY 2024-25

- Brian Alexander | IV Labs
- Hansen Ball | New River Computing
- Mindy Boyd | Goodwill Industries of the Valley
- April DeMotts | Montgomery County
- Lauren Dudley | HCA LewisGale Hospital Montgomery
- Sarah Eaton-McDaniel | BAE Systems
- Jon Fitzwater | Appalachian Power
- Rodney Fultz | Carilion New River Valley Medical Center
- John Gardner | Branch Builds
- Cora Gnegy | Giles County
- Brian Hamilton | Montgomery County EDA
- Matt Hanratty | Town of Blacksburg
- Vince Hatcher | Hollingsworth & Vose
- Nathan Hockersmith | Atlantic Union Bank
- Marty Holliday | Floyd County EDA
- Angela Joyner | Radford University
- Adam Keffer | Celanese Corporation
- Carie Kingery | Freedom First Credit Union
- Linda Millsaps | Floyd County
- Kevin Meredith | Pulaski County EDA
- John Provo | Virginia Tech
- Kim Repass | City of Radford
- Scott Ross | Salem Stone Corporation
- Mark Rowh | New River Community College
- Mike Vellines | Hurt & Proffitt
- Laura Walters | Pulaski County
- Lee Wheeler | Giles County IDA
- 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 2024-25

- Mark Woolwine, Chair | Brown Edwards
- Lauren Dudley, Vice Chair | HCA LewisGale Hospital Montgomery
- April DeMotts, Treasurer | Montgomery County
- Cora Gnegy, Secretary | Giles County
- Mike Vellines | Hurt & Proffitt
- Rodney Fultz | Carilion NRV Medical Center
- Linda Millsaps | Floyd County
- Kim Repass | City of Radford
- Laura Walters | Pulaski County





**[www.OnwardNRV.org](http://www.OnwardNRV.org)**

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