

Valley Business

FRONT

FOR THE UP AND COMING
AND ALREADY ARRIVED

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The Picture of
**Economic
Development**

Beth Doughty,
Roanoke Regional Partnership

NEW FACE AT VALLEY BANK

Bob Scarborough

After spending seven years away from the Roanoke Valley, Bob and his wife are thrilled to be returning home. He has over 20 years of banking experience including retail, small business, mortgage and investments.

As the new manager of Private Wealth Management at Valley, here are Bob's thoughts on returning home to the Roanoke Valley and Valley Bank.

"Living outside the Valley for the past seven years has only strengthened my love and passion for this region. I have always considered this valley home because of the friendly people, deep relationships, outstanding culture, and beautiful countryside.

Having lived and worked in Roanoke for 15 years demonstrated that Southwest Virginia has the most loyal, dedicated, community oriented people I have encountered.

As I looked for an opportunity to return to the Roanoke Valley I knew the best place for me would be Valley Bank because of their strong commitment to the community and to making sure clients thrive when meeting their financial needs.

Valley Bank's strong track record of putting clients' needs first during good times and challenging times made my decision to work at Valley Bank an easy one."

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We have an exciting announcement. Our FRONT cover story is all about economic development, and we are jumping up and down with news of our collaboration with Virginia Tech's economic development initiative via Outreach and International Affairs "Save Our Towns" project. This initiative takes us to small towns in Appalachia, where we'll be presenting snapshots into the work being done to build or rebuild stronger communities, many of which are rebounding after the exit of various industries that are no longer viable for one reason or another. You'll get a peek at the first one in this very edition of FRONT; it follows our cover story. And we invite you to visit Virginia Tech's interactive website at www.saveourtowns.outreach.vt.edu where you'll meet the mayors at these featured sites.

Renewal and prosperity can come from a lot of things, but there's no question it all begins with focused attention. And that's the very thing we do best at FRONT. It's *Appalachia—right at'cha...* and we invite you along for the ride.



Tom Field

“
No public or private-sector program is going to create a job market equilibrium. It's solely up to the job seeker

— Page 49



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building business building

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Cover photography of Beth Doughty by Tom Field.

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AUGUST



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Editorial Advisory Board

Valley Business FRONT has organized an Editorial Advisory Board in order to help direct coverage. FRONT selected a group of 16 diverse business professionals, who will serve as a sounding board throughout the 18 month rotational term that will turn over every year and a half.

This board has been given the task of helping FRONT understand the issues and develop coverage. "Members essentially have a red telephone at their hand," says publisher Tom Field. "The can inform us best on what is important, what is new, what impacts the greater community. Of course, our red phone reaches right back to them as well, for assignments and insight on our coverage. Although the members are encouraged to keep FRONT updated on their own industries and the key players, they aren't limited to their area of specialty, as all commercial enterprises ultimately collaborate to impact our quality of life here in this part of Virginia." An additional contribution by the Editorial Advisory Board involves direct input on the various FRONTLists we present throughout the year.

CONTRIBUTORS



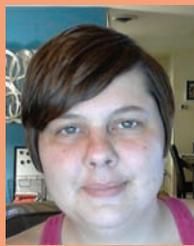
Sarah Cox



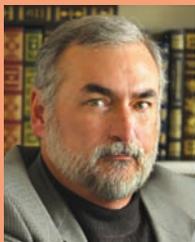
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“I’ve done career development like Mr. Magoo

— Page 38

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 68.

2014 Members

- Nancy Agee** Carilion (Wellness)
- Laura Bradford** Claire V (Retail)
- Nicholas C. Conte** Woods Rogers (Legal)
- Warner Dalhouse** Retired (Seniors)
- John Garland** Spectrum (Development)
- James Glass** JG Co. (Development)
- Nancy Gray** Hollins University (Education)
- Ellis Gutshall** Valley Bank (Finance)
- Nanci Hardwick** Aeroprobe (Tech/Industry)
- George Kegley** Retired (Seniors)
- John D. Long** Salem Museum (Culture)
- Nancy May** LewisGale Regional Health System (Wellness)
- Stuart Mease** Virginia Tech (Education)
- Mary Miller** IDD (Tech/Industry)
- Ed Walker** Regeneration Partners (Development)

You will note that the Board is comprised of experts in many different business / industry “fronts.” This is intentional, as we are reporting on all the areas that affect our regional economy and are important to you. In keeping with our policy of being “the voice of business in the valleys” we ask each reader to join us as an editorial partner by calling or e-mailing us your ideas. You know more than we know about your business—or you certainly should—and that inside knowledge shared with our readers will make us all better at what we do.

“I am a good eater, not a good cook

— Page 58

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Open for



Business



On one of his first days on the job, Aric Bopp, the executive director for the New River Valley Economic Alliance, passed a little boy coming out of a store with his mother. The boy held a box of candy in one hand and a ball in the other. "The kid looked at his mom," Bopp recalls, "and said, 'I'm so glad you got a job.' That kind of thing is why I like what I do," Bopp said. "It really matters to people, to have a decent job, to be able to provide. That's part of the solution."

Bopp told this story as he looked out on the 18-acre construction site that will become Red Sun Farms' Dublin, Virginia, location. The Mexican company grows hydroponic vegetables—if you buy a tomato at Kroger it will likely hold their sunset sticker. The entire operation will span close to fifty acres when all phases of the project are complete and employ more than 200 people.

A textbook definition of economic development might be "wealth creation for a community." Not swimming pools and movie stars wealth, but an investment in a community that brings the steady, well-paying jobs Bopp referred to. The kinds of jobs that let people buy homes, cars, and other basics along with a few of the extras—a meal out once in a while, a new outfit, flowers for the front garden, summer vacations.

Red Sun Farms settling in the New River Valley is a great example of the ups and downs of economic development. The farm is developed on the 1,000-acre New River Valley Commerce Park, a property jointly owned by the Virginia Regional Industrial Facility Authority, an organization comprised of 13 member governments including Roanoke City, Roanoke County, and Montgomery County.

The commerce park is a creative solution to one of the area's greatest problems, as one of our region's most cherished attributes can be a major hindrance. "Developing here is challenging. We are surrounded by mountains," Jill Loope,

A Special FRONTReport: Economic Development in the Valleys >

Executive Summary:
Building a community's economic vitality is about as high stakes a game as one can play; here's the view from those sitting close to the table.

By Laura Purcell



Laura Purcell

The greenhouses (top and bottom pictures) under construction in Dublin, Virginia will soon be home to Red Sun Farms. Housed at the New River Valley Commerce Park, which is jointly owned by thirteen different municipalities in the region.



Red Sun Farms analyzed weather data from the last 50 years, and our average temperature did not exceed 99 degrees. You see, tomato plants don't like to get too hot.

—Aric Bopp

economic director for Roanoke County, said. “We don’t want to cut our mountains out,” she adds, and although it has been done, the prospect is expensive and usually unpopular. To have 1,000 congruous and relatively flat acres is unique, and the property affords good access—adjacent to the New River Valley Airport and near I-81—sound reasoning for the inter-government partnership to invest in the land.

Red Sun Farms’ arrival, however, comes at the departure of another big employer, Caterpillar. In November 2013 Caterpillar announced it would close its Pulaski plant, which employed about 240 people and manufactured scoops, coal haulers, and other mining equipment. The mining industry has experienced a downturn, and the



Laura Purcell



Tom Field

Beth Doughty

manufacturer had to make a difficult decision. “Those were really good jobs,” Bopp said. While Red Sun brings jobs, it doesn’t replace Caterpillar.

But gains and losses are part of the reality.

“The Sierra Nevada deal, that was a big loss,” Beth Doughty, executive director at the Roanoke Regional Partnership, said of the west coast brewers who considered Roanoke and the New River Valley, but ultimately chose Asheville for their east coast site. “We came in second. The fundamentals they were looking for are here—we have good water and access to the outdoors. But at the time, we didn’t have a developed beer culture,” Doughty said, although she feels that has changed, citing festivals and microbreweries new to the region since 2011. “I wish we had another chance at that,” she said.

With loss comes learning. In a 2012 Roanoke Times article analyzing the Sierra Nevada opportunity, Katelyn Polantz wrote, “economic development teams in the Roanoke Valley have realized the value of marketing the area’s trails, rivers, bike paths and mountain culture.” Sierra Nevada management made its first foray to Roanoke in January

““”

The traditional way of looking at [economic development] has been about business attraction, but you also need to look at business expansion, retention and creation.

— Beth Doughty



Laura Purcell



Laura Purcell

Backcountry.com's iconic logo looms large on I-81 in Christiansburg. By placing the retailer's URL on the other side of the building, the logo counts as a mural, thus not in violation of the county's sign ordinance.

“ ”

They clap their hands every time it snows.

— Brian Hamilton,
about Backcountry.com

2011—that October, the Roanoke Regional Partnership helped organize the first Go Outside Festival, a weekend celebrating outdoor recreation and featuring, among other things, craft beer. The partnership also founded Roanokeoutside.com, a comprehensive website featuring outdoor activities and became an independent nonprofit in 2013.

“We’ve put a lot of effort into developing the outdoors as an economic sector,” Doughty said. “In business attraction, the outdoors is a sector too. For most of our history, we’ve ignored those natural amenities as an asset. It isn’t tourism, but for us to help create a business sector around it.”

That development has paid off with the arrival of Backcountry.com to Christiansburg. “They’re the Amazon.com of outdoor equipment,” said Brian Hamilton, economic development director for Montgomery County. The online distributor, based in Utah, does 70 percent of its business on the east coast. “From here, you can get to New York or Atlanta in eight hours. With the UPS distribution center in Roanoke, you can have one day delivery with a drop off at 11 pm,” Hamilton said.

There’s an element of excitement with new business stories, but the reality is those are few and far between. “In any given year, we might work with 100 companies looking to expand or relocate,” said Aric Bopp. “Out of that 100, 24 might visit and do a site search. And of those 24, one or two might set up shop,” Bopp said. In economic development, growing and retaining existing businesses is just as important as attracting new ones. “We want to make sure employers stay here,” Hamilton said.

One company that has stayed is Aeroprobe, an aerospace engineering firm. Aeroprobe got its start in the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center and used Virginia Tech’s wind tunnel to conduct many of its experiments. When Virginia Tech cut back Aeroprobe’s wind tunnel time, Hamilton

““”

I think Roanoke is on the brink to explode, I really do. It is more progressive, more exciting, than it ever has been before.

In the 21st century that means something. People want to be where the action is, and there is huge opportunity. We are going to be in that narrative of where people want to live. I think we are going to see the area continue its rise.

— Beth Doughy



Laura Purcell

When Aeroprobe outgrew its space in Virginia Tech’s Corporate Research Center, Montgomery County economic development officer Brian Hamilton found them temporary space while they built a new building nearby.





Laura Purcell

found a vacant, ten thousand square foot building in the Blacksburg Industrial Park to use. “That was a temporary solution,” Hamilton explains, and he worked with Aeroprobe to find a property in Christiansburg’s Falling Branch Corporate Park where they could construct a building to suit their needs—and keep jobs in the county.

Economic developers also work to redevelop government-owned properties. Hamilton cites the old Price’s Fork Elementary School building, left vacant after a much-needed new school opened in 2011. “The community saw the Price’s Fork school as part of their quality of life, and wanted to see it maintained, refurbished, and redeveloped,” Hamilton said. The property sold in 2013, and Taylor Hollow Construction is refurbishing the schoolhouse as apartments for seniors.

When one property is developed in the community’s interest, timing, policy, and politics may encumber others, like the slow-to-develop old Middle School property in Blacksburg, or the commercial development of the former Huff Lane School in Roanoke.

“Everything you do should be about citizens,” Wayne Strickland, executive director of the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, said. He stresses, however, envisioning a broader picture. “Look at it in terms of our region—stretching from the Allegheny Highlands to Franklin County, 325,000 people. Is this going to be great for the majority of

Wayne Strickland, executive director, Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission

The Daleville Town Center in Botetourt County is a juxtaposition of urban-style buildings against a rural landscape.

““

You have to be creative, you can’t think about economic development the way we used to think about it in the 70s. You’ll see they’re thinking differently about how to pursue perspective businesses.

— Wayne Strickland



Laura Purcell

Some economic development offices are an arm of government. Others are partnerships between several groups to represent a common interest. Here, Wayne Strickland, executive director of the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, poses by a collage of the different districts he represents.



Effective land use planning is becoming more critical to the process. That will determine the future course of a community, so the better we plan, the better economic development activity we will have.

— Jill Loope

people? The decision makers, elected officials, have to balance that,” Strickland said.

All economic developers agree that making choices about what businesses to bring, and where to put them, ultimately rests on the shoulders of elected officials—city and town council members, county boards of supervisors, and beyond. “In the past, decisions were made without talking to the community,” Strickland said. “But now there is more emphasis on getting feedback.”

“The last thing you want to try and do is attract a business and have the community not want it,” Jill Loope said. Loope started her career in sales, and still uses those skills in her work for Roanoke County. “It is the most complex form of selling you can imagine,” Loope said.

“You want both parties to be satisfied, the community and the prospective business,” Loope said. “There’s more transparency in the process,” than in the past, she says. But in many cases zoning decisions have predestined development. “If a property is already zoned for a particular type of development, [a business] can buy and build on it tomorrow, in terms of an approval process. If it is a county owned property, we’ve already gone through that process,” Loope said.

Loope is proud of a recent gain, Roanoke County’s single largest manufacturing investment in its history—Ardagh Group, a Luxembourg-based packaging company. Ardagh

Jill Loope, director of economic development for Roanoke County looks out her office window at the mountains that pose one of the area’s greatest challenges to development.

COVER STORY



Laura Purcell





Laura Purcell

purchased a 600,000 square foot building formerly owned by Hanover Direct. "It is a \$100 million project with 100 jobs to start, and long term growth plans are significant for the community," Loope said. One of Ardagh's suppliers, Canline, has also opened a facility nearby.

"A vacant building of that size really helped attract the company to the county," Loope said. A "will build to suit" sign on a grassy patch is no longer enough to attract a company. With the pace of business moving ever faster, companies want to hit the ground running.

If businesses aren't waiting, then the municipalities who hope to attract them have to prepare and anticipate their needs. "When I first came on board, some of our zoning was prohibitive for some businesses," said Jay Brenchick, who was appointed Botetourt County's first economic development officer earlier this year (the county administrator previously took care of those duties himself). "We had zoning for manufacturing and zoning for an office park, and they were two different things. Now we're proposing a research and advanced manufacturing zoning, so that a company's headquarters, research and development, and manufacturing can all be housed in one building. We've had our public hearings and it is still in the process of getting approved. But overall, the change is more inclusive. It doesn't present challenges to the traditional, but allows companies that prefer a newer way of doing business, where everything is housed in one area," Brenchick said.

Jay Brenchick is the first person to serve Botetourt County in a position fully devoted to economic development

Updating zoning restrictions in Botetourt County will allow more flexibility for businesses looking to reside in the Greenfield Center.

“”
You can have all the perfect things for them, but if you haven't done your homework and aren't ready to work with a prospect and show the research, it doesn't really matter.

— Jay Brenchick



““”

Nobody's making more land, nobody's generating a lot of revenue in tight budget times. How do you do it? Partnerships and creativity.

— Jill Loope

Much of Botetourt's development hopes and dreams are hinged on its Center at Greenfield, a picturesque business park with wild turkeys crossing the road and a meeting and education center so lovely that on weekends it is used for weddings. "Greenfield is an ideal location," Brenchick said. "Our biggest challenge right now is not having a lot of existing buildings for companies to move into. [Greenfield is] a pad site, so it is ready for construction, but there aren't [empty] buildings there, and there aren't a lot in the county. Most companies want an existing building. A lot of smaller companies are growing, but they don't have anyplace to expand to."

Brenchick is realistic and conservative in his approach. "You make changes incrementally," he said. "I believe economic development is doing what the community wants. If you come in and make major changes, that kind of person isn't usually around very long."

Sometimes growing business can mean looking farther afield. The New River Valley's largest employer is Virginia Tech—a stable source of relatively high paying jobs and a catalyst for new business. When Red Sun Farms was researching the area, they consulted the university's meteorologists, entomologists, and made site visits to Kentland Farms, an agricultural research facility for Virginia Tech. "That's an important part of what we do," said John Provo, director of Virginia Tech's Office of Economic Development. "Making our knowledge and talents available to companies as they make decisions to move to or grow in Virginia."

An important part of Provo's job is to "make sure this region's innovation ecosystem stays robust," and to do that sometimes involves looking farther afield. To that end, Virginia Tech has opened a new research facility—in Arlington County.

The Arlington center, according to Provo, "is about building bridges between that economy and this area. We have a wealth of alumni involved in industries that make sense to connect with opportunities in Blacksburg. There's a wealth of economic energy in Northern Virginia, but there is a cost curve they have to deal with. Research activities could take place here, and we could make a contribution to each other's prosperity," Provo said.

The industries that were once economic mainstays to this region—rail, agriculture, textiles—will never reappear in quite the same way again. And not every economic answer lies with the next new company to open its doors. What works best is a shifting balance of old and new, fostering growth, respecting our assets and strengths, adapting to change, and planning. "You eliminate fear and risk through proper planning," said Jill Loope. 



Kyle Fletcher

St. Paul's mayor its biggest booster >

Executive Summary:

Virginia Tech's Save Our Towns series will follow the tiny town's economic development efforts for a year

By Andrea Brunais

Mayor Kyle Fletcher makes no apologies. Competitive and hopeful, he loves his town, where he taught high school for three decades. Roots run deep: His dad founded a timber company.

He defines his town as scrappy, quick and

relentless. That lion-hearted quality brought St. Paul a Virginia Main Street designation after a 10-year effort despite its being one of the commonwealth's smallest bergs.

Mayor for six years, Fletcher just won another two. His agenda includes building a sewer plant to make money from neighboring counties and a nearby Dominion plant.

Tourism assets abound: "We're only 40 minutes from the Breaks, called the Grand Canyon of the South. We're on the Trail of the Lonesome Pine. We have the Clinch River, the most biodiverse river in the world."

Other Appalachian towns also fight for tourist dollars. Fletcher says St. Paul will prevail. "We think that we're tough. We've always been tough." 



SAVE OUR TOWNS

A new online series to inspire and guide leaders in small-town Appalachia working to create prosperity and jobs

www.SaveOurTowns.outreach.vt.edu

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Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

Executive Summary:

Being stylish never meant stiff and uncomfortable, but 'comfortwear' is becoming more prevalent than ever.

Fashion Changes >

The best thing about fashion is that you can count on it to change.

For instance, in men's businesswear, socks are now the hottest way for a man to show individuality. Previously we caught only a glimpse of dark or neutral socks under the trouser hem. Today's slimmer menswear suits have narrow legs and a shorter inseam, so the ankles and socks are visible.

Also, ties have been an acceptable way men could express their personality, but men are going tie-less more often. Socks afford men another way to insert a bright color or interesting pattern to the overall outfit without flaunting convention.

As a result, many new sock companies are sprouting up and their sales are booming. For example, according to The Daily Ticker, Sock It To Me, a sock supplier based in Portland, Oregon, earned \$5 million in sales last year. Also, sales for Strideline Socks, a company that employs only two 22-year-old workers, grew almost 600% between 2011 and 2012.

Along with other companies, they offer bold and attention-grabbing patterns in men's socks. Prices are higher than your average black socks, of course, with the Daily Ticker noting prices can range from \$10 to \$100 per pair.

Despite this, young professionals in staid financial and legal professions are enjoying sporting jazzy socks to show some much-needed individuality at work.

One other surprising fashion change is that a trend toward so-called "athleisure" wear is overshadowing an American icon: jeans.

Again, The Daily Ticker notes, "Teens are favoring yoga pants over jeans by a big margin, but Levi's President & CEO Chip Bergh says the trend is also popular among women, in general, and that's hurting his company."

In 1995 Levi's had \$7.1 billion in revenues, but since then they've fallen to \$4.6 billion. CEO Bergh laments that more people are eschewing their usual jeans, saying "What used to be a premium jeans occasion for women is now socially acceptable to be a yoga pants occasion." Now Levi's is working to bring to consumers "super soft, super stretchy jeans" to meet that demand.

Like many others, I thought jeans were too casual in texture and design for the business office. I'm glad we're getting away from them, but will "athleisure" wear take over Casual Fridays?

Perhaps we need to lobby Levi's to develop clothing with the comfort of yoga pants - and the good looks of a business suit. 

Send comments or questions to Kathy@peacockimage.com

Tattoos >

Lest we think tattooing is a modern practice, let's take a quick peak into history. Mankind has always enjoyed adorning the body with art, and the practice dates back to at least 6000 BC to South America. History also tells us that the first documented tattoo artist in America tattooed soldiers on both sides during the Civil War

Let's fast forward and discuss tattoos in the workplace. Not too long ago a parent would admonish, "You'll never get a job with that tattoo!" Today, tattoos have undoubtedly become more accepted in mainstream America. Businesswise, as companies stress their commitment to inclusion and diversity, tattoos are becoming less taboo in some workplaces. If you want to hire a lot of Millennials, better get comfortable with tattoos!

I spoke to several professionals responsible for hiring and firing. One said, "...Just because you think it's your right to have tattoos doesn't mean it's smart to display them." Another, the head of a law office with over 100 lawyers, dismissed the idea out of hand. "If I see a tattoo, I don't hire." Another, an office manager in a large firm, said "I don't care if I can't see them."

Smart professionals should consider their goals when it comes to a job search or advancing a career. They need to think about whether their "tats" will risk their chance of landing a position or of moving up the career ladder.

So what is more important? Is it one's freedom of expression or a career? By the way, some think that tattoos are protected by the First Amendment, but beware; the federal government does not protect tattoos under the First Amendment.

Some suggestions:

- Be aware of the cultural values in the workplaces in which you see yourself working.
- Be aware that there are certain "conservative" cultures that may not tolerate visible tattoos, no matter how small. These include the legal, accounting, engineering and medical professions.
- Be aware of regional differences in attitudes. Southwest Virginia is not LA!
- Be aware that age has something to do with attitudes towards tattoos: the older the employer, the more likely he or she will dislike them.

Remember there are countless ways to express yourself as a distinctive person. If tattooing is your choice, go for it, but consider placing them where you can cover them up. You don't want to create a permanent barrier to your career, do you? 



Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey Harshberger

Executive Summary:
To tat or not to tat may not be the question; it might just be how, when or where.



Small Business

By Samantha Steidle

Executive Summary:
Let the power of podcasting broadcast your business.

Podcasting Power >

Podcasting. It's a strange word. You've heard it. You've listened to podcasts on your computer. You've downloaded them to your handheld digital devices.

So why aren't you taking podcasting seriously as a business tool? If you have a computer, you have what it takes to create audio files, which is the first step toward podcasting. Yet few business owners think to do this.

Consider letting your audience hear who you are.

We like voices

As a medium, podcasting can be considered an extension of radio, says Bonnie Cranmer, Marketing Director of Blue Ridge Green Media, which provides media consulting services.

"Like dee-jays, podcast hosts create relationships with their audiences in the same way," says Cranmer. "It gives business owners an opportunity to create relationships with customers and build their personal brand."

There's something comforting about the human voice. It's why we tune into the radio for our favorite programs.

That same effect can occur between you and your customers, as you explain the various aspects of your business in podcasts. Your audience will get to know you and, hopefully, like you and trust your expertise.

Storytelling and problem solving

The primary goal of a podcast is to tell a story. How long the podcast should be depends on how long it takes to tell the story, but keep in mind that your audience's time is as precious as yours. You'll want to learn the art of conveying information in an entertaining but succinct way.

But you don't have to be a professional entertainer or storyteller to be successful at podcasting your business. You just have to have a good idea for a podcast and convey useful information to your audience. You should answer this question: "What problem can I solve for my audience?"

Authenticity is a treasure. Be yourself.

The podcasting process goes like this: You record it. Then you host it on a service such as Sound Cloud or Libsyn. Then you create a channel in iTunes (or Stitcher for Android). Finally, you post the podcasts on your

website and you push them out to your social media community.

Time to try podcasting

You can do a podcast on your own or as part of an interview with others. You can do one “on location” somewhere, with the sounds of that place included.

Some of the most popular podcasts, says Cranmer, are those that feature interactions with the audience via feedback. Such responsiveness with your audience is what builds a relationship over time.

Podcasting can be done on the fly with your own equipment, and there are devices out there that are quite good at filtering out background noise. For those who would like a polished, studio effect, CoLab in Roanoke is building a podcast studio to support its members and the community at large. Additionally, CoLab is launching its own podcast, called Roanoke Startup Scene, which will highlight Roanoke's entrepreneurial activity. If you're an entrepreneur in Roanoke, watch out, a podcaster might be coming to talk to you soon. 

““”

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Hank McHale

Mike Wray

Financial Matters

Go deep for bottom line >

Executive Summary:

Consultant Hank McHale says industrial operators must dig deep for root causes to keep or improve profitability.

By Gene Marrano

Profitability in manufacturing is often measured in single-digit margins. 10 percent? Outstanding ... 3 to 5 percent? More the norm. A long time, well-traveled former CEO who worked in a variety of, let's say, unglamorous industries says companies can bump up those profit margins several points – or more – if they are willing to roll up their sleeves and take long, hard looks at manufacturing processes.

Hank McHale has hung out a shingle as Hank McHale & Associates, an industrial consultant. He's worked as Chief Executive Officer for corporations on the East Coast

and in the Midwest, companies that have made auto parts, investment castings, jet engine parts, recycled components ... even the exterior shells for space shuttle solid rocket boosters.

Everyone wants a better bottom line says McHale, who holds a Ph.D. in marketing and economics from the University of Illinois. In the parts and components manufacturing

industry, where margins can be razor thin and pricing pressure also comes from offshore, it behooves companies to take a top-down approach when looking to increase their profitability.

Now the Smith Mountain Lake resident is taking his experience on the road as a consultant (see hankmchale.com) – delivering a message that's often hard for CEO's and top managers to wrap their arms around. McHale introduces them to a five-step process that can reduce manufacturing costs – and increase profitability:

1. Conduct a discovery session
2. Estimate the amount of potential cost improvement in annual dollars
3. Determine root causes for cost variance
4. Set a course of action
5. Implement solutions.

McHale likes to look at sales and marketing efforts first – if you don't know how to sell a product successfully then improving the process won't have the impact it should. Identify "core competencies and competitive advantages," first when deciding to make changes McHale advises. "What you really need to be marketing is what gives you an advantage over the competition."

Manufacturers must be ready to handle any increase in business once they can identify and successfully market those advantages. McHale then urges his clients – and all manufacturers for that matter – to dig deep for root causes, which can range from inferior equipment

or tooling that causes loss of productivity, to an employee's failure to follow instructions, inefficient process routing and a too-complex part design. This is a step where McHale claims where many stop short of finding true root causes.

Setting up an action plan and implementing it is another matter. Companies that got swept up in the "Six Sigma" quality improvement effort decades ago may have produced lots of charts and graphs, but without buy-in from top line management it's difficult to change a company culture. "This is much broader than Six Sigma, which is a very narrow concept for manufacturing," says McHale, who puts quality measurement programs at the end of his transformation process.

"It is human nature to resist change," writes McHale in his Five Step breakdown on the

website. "Any improvement actions will naturally involve change and, therefore, will be met with some resistance." Have a *workable* implementation plan McHale urges.

McHale has also put down many of his thoughts in a book, *Actual Experiences of a CEO: How to Make Continuous Improvement in Manufacturing Succeed for Your Company*. The initial print run of 5,000 sold out but the book is still available online. As a consultant McHale plans to work regionally at first and then branch out nationwide.

Put strategic plans that integrate all parts of the business improvement process on paper, don't just store it in the back of your brain. "It makes you think much more in depth," says McHale – who is ready to take a lifetime of varied manufacturing experiences and show others the way to a healthier bottom line. 

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Kathy Tune of K&J Café employs ex-offenders that are referred to her from Virginia CARES. From left to right: Shawn Hunter, employment specialist, Heather Leftwich, intake and enrollment specialist, and Sam Coles, case manager of Virginia CARES, show off the award the state CARES office gave to the Roanoke site for its achievement – the highest out of 14 sites – in job placement.

A chance to move ahead >

Executive Summary:

A study shows 92 percent of people helped by Virginia CARES did not return to prison; the national rate of recidivism is over 40 percent.

By Sarah Cox

It's not remotely easy for an ex-offender to get a job. According to the National Employment Law Project (NELP) report, it is estimated that 70 million Americans—or one in four adults—have a criminal record that may show up on a routine background check report. The Virginia CARES reentry

program does a lot to alleviate the tough transition from prison to life on the outside. This program, started as a pilot project in 1978 under Total Action Against Poverty (TAP, now Total Action for Progress), has expanded across the state, but the office of Virginia CARES in Roanoke is setting the rest of the state on fire. This year fiscal year (2013-2014) the local office has served over 600 individuals and helped them secure 205 jobs. The referrals to the program mostly come from probation and parole officers, said President of TAP Ted Edlich. "We get referred people who have the most difficulty – those who have the least education or work history background, the longest time served, and sometimes the most difficult offenses. The centerpiece to preventing recidivism is employment."

Shawn Hunter, an employment specialist with Virginia CARES, explained that they

VA CARES



Donna McCullough, a graduate of the Virginia CARES program, holds down a job, passed her GED, and plans to attend Virginia Western Community College.

do personal evaluations, address health concerns and education deficits, help ex-offenders obtain IDs, help with transportation, and put them through job readiness classes that include resume writing, mock interviews, and a visit to the Virginia Employment Commission. His attitude is that “they have served their time, they are now out and they need shelter, clothing and food. The only way they can go about doing this, legally, is through a job. If they don’t have that, they will get it through crime, selling dope and stealing.”

Donna McCullough, 47 years old, with a record of “possession with intent” and embezzlement, just received her GED, holds down a job, and plans to attend

Virginia Western Community College. She has been on drugs, homeless, beaten up, and eaten out of a garbage can. She said Virginia CARES put her in touch with the Higher Education Center, where she took her GED; gave her bus tickets to look for work, gave her moral support, computers to look for jobs, and “food when I didn’t have food. I was out of touch with society for a long time because I was on drugs. I didn’t know how to use computers, I didn’t have a cell phone, and I felt like I didn’t fit in.”

Kathy Tune, owner of K&J Café on Melrose Avenue, believes in giving ex-offenders a second chance. “Somebody had to give me a second chance – I have a felony.” But Tune also has two master’s degrees,

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one in accounting and one in business administration, and almost always has at least one ex-offender on her payroll. "I have hired them through Virginia CARES. The ones I have gotten through that program have been the best ones," she said.

Tune pointed out that employers of ex-offenders can take advantage of a tax credit and request bonding as insurance. Edlich added that the office of Virginia CARES doesn't bring anybody to an employer that they don't feel good about.

"Once we transform a life, they become taxpayers generating an income, go out to eat, buy clothes, and give back to the community. They are consumers, not thieves, and that's

helping the community," said Hunter.

Ann Fisher, executive director of the program, said a recidivism study from June 2011 to June 2012 revealed that 92 percent of those helped by Virginia CARES did not go back to a prison or jail system. The national rate of recidivism is 43.3 percent. "It costs us on the average about \$250-\$275 to support a participant through our program. The recidivism cost, according to a Virginia Senate finance committee report in 2011, is about \$27,000 per person per year."

"We have a history of being able to help those individuals find a job or housing. We're the last place these individuals have to go," she said. 

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Fitnet tops app charts >

Executive Summary:

Blacksburg's Bob Summers has a top rated health app on his hands, and he's leveraged our proclivity towards habitual digital dependency to make it popular.

By Wil Cleaveland

In early January, Blacksburg-based developer Bob Summers' new application, Fitnet, was released as the first iPad fitness app to utilize a biometric webcam for live workout feedback and user-trainer connectivity. In less than six months, the app found its way to iPad users across the globe, 85 countries to be exact. What's more, it shot to the top of the Apple iTunes App Store charts, right next to apps from WebMD, Weight Watchers, and Disney Fitness. On June 30, Fitnet was made compatible with the iPhone, boosting it into the top 5 fitness apps in the App Store and resulting in recognition from Apple as the #1 new fitness app.

A variety of revolutionary features put Fitnet a cut above the rest in terms of mobile fitness, and Summers believes that the app will set a new precedent for fitness technology.



Greg Vaughn

Bob Summers

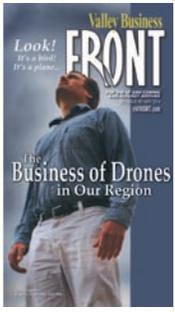
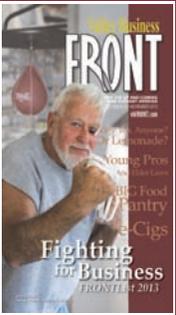
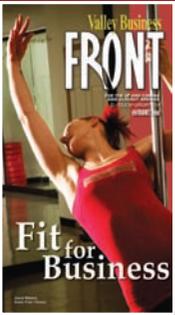
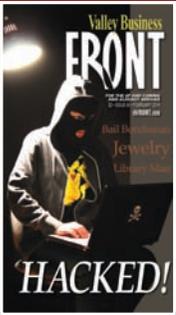
The Origins of Fitnet

While researching the new capabilities of gigabit internet (delivered through a high speed fiber connection) in Chattanooga, TN, Summers encountered a problem: his fitness routine started to falter after

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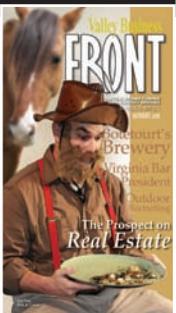
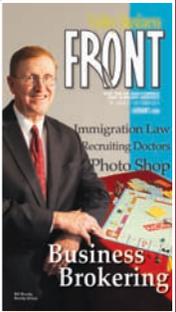
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two years of steady progress. As the problem persisted, he began to question what was really keeping him from pursuing his fitness goals while working abroad, all the while wondering how the astonishing speed of gigabit internet could be utilized as a solution.

He concluded that a lack of accountability and accessibility were the core inhibitors of his fitness goals. When away from home — trying to work out remotely — he had no support from his instructors and workout partners, no structure in his workout routine, and no access to a fitness facility.

That's when the Fitnet concept was born — a mobile app platform utilizing the speed of gigabit internet to connect trainers and users while providing real time biometric feedback through device webcams.

A Fitness App Like No Other

There are several features that set Fitnet apart from the pack, most of which hinge on the app's use of a biometric webcam:

- **Adaptive user experience** - Fitnet adapts to each individual user, learning their behavior and improving their experience progressively. The app also allows users to customize the speed, intensity, and duration of their workouts on their own.
- **Instant feedback from a biometric webcam** - Executing each exercise movement correctly is crucial for success. That's why Fitnet integrates a biometric webcam that monitors users' movements and positioning, giving instant feedback on their performance.
- **Interactive connectivity between users and trainers** - For motivation and support, Fitnet connects users with a virtual community of trainers and fitness partners. Users can workout in real time with their friends and favorite trainers.

"We hope extended availability and customization of workouts by style and training levels helps users stay motivated to reach their personal fitness goals," says Fitnet trainer Jennifer Miller. "Fortunately, users have live feedback from myself and other Fitnet trainers to keep them on-track, and now, they can stick us in their pockets and take us wherever they go, giving them the flexibility to workout anywhere, any time."

Channeling the Habit-Forming Power of Mobile Apps

Think about what you do when you have a free five minutes during your day. If you browse Facebook, check Twitter, or head over to another social platform, your behavior is in the majority. What is it about these time-wasting apps that makes them so tempting to fall back on?

Summers says it's all about the content.

"Applications create behavioral change. When you're bored, you go to your phone and check out Twitter or Facebook. They've figured out how to hook you," says Summers. "They give users something interesting every time they open the app."

As users get into the routine of opening apps and enjoying fresh, relevant content, a reward cycle forms in which strong habits are built over time.

As Fitnet grows, Summers hopes to harness this habit-forming power for good.

"It's hard to keep someone on a health and fitness routine, but it's possible that digital fitness and technology can learn from those other applications to cultivate beneficial habits," says Summers. 



Michael Miller

Tech Scoop

I can read your mind... unfortunately >

Executive Summary:

With technology comes a whole new round of liabilities.

By Michael Miller

Back in my college days, dorm rooms and student apartments did not look like they do today. There were no high-end trail bicycles, or disc golf sets, or soccer balls, or anything else that would be good for exercise. In fact there might not have even been soap or food. There would have been roommates who looked and sounded like Tommy Chong wandering around in a daze, breathing in smoke

from incense burners (or something else), saying things like “Groovy, man”.

Well, OK, so that’s really just a retelling of the standard late-60s/early-70s hippie stereotype. But it puts you in the ‘groove’ to ‘dig’ what I am about to say about technology. See, over in the corner of the bookshelf, next to the Lava Lamp, might have been a little black box with electrodes and a speaker that could be used to control your brain waves.

In the 1970s people began to experiment with conscious control of brain function through feedback. The electrodes attached to your head could pick up electrical signals from your brain. By playing a tone over the speaker, one could actually focus brain activity and create relaxing moods similar to meditative states. This turned out to be a

valid therapy for anxiety and sleep disorders, in a rudimentary sense, and has continued to be developed over the past 40 years.

So what? you may ask. Well, here’s what.

A primary research focus of the Virginia Tech-Carilion Research Institute is brain function. Various researchers there study how the brain responds to trauma, how it can be reprogrammed, how it develops habits, and how it is affected by nutrition, among other things. And one of the first equipment purchases at VTCRI was a multi-million dollar functional magnetic resonance imager.

That’s a very sophisticated brain activity monitor, sort of like the alpha-wave monitor of the 70s dorm room on super expensive steroids. Using the fMRI as it is called, researchers can observe how the brain responds to tasks being performed by the subject. And by cleverly designing the tasks and allowing the subject to receive feedback when certain areas of the brain are stimulated, it is possible to have a person with trauma actually reprogram

his brain to bypass the problem areas and restore functionality.

Think about stroke victims or military personnel who were exposed to explosive devices, and you can immediately see the applications.

Of course, nothing this cool can be limited to the research labs. A company called Emotiv sells a brain monitor headset that allows regular people like you and me to actually write computer applications to allow us to use our brains to control things. Like wheelchairs for quadriplegics, for example. But also, like video games for bored teenagers, unfortunately.

Anyway, you can see how this could be huge in both therapy and entertainment. But like all technological geniuses, this one has a dark side. I can also ask you questions

while monitoring your brain activity and figure out your bank account and social security numbers. I could probably design a video game that would do this for me and then send me the information without your knowledge. I can likely figure out your product purchasing preferences, who you are really going to vote for, and whether or not you are more than 'just friends' with that co-worker.

As always, it seems that technologies which have the most promise to do real good in the world also have the seeds of the threat to do the most harm. Sigh. I suppose we'll just have to watch this one carefully and try to keep it in the bottle as much as possible.

In the meantime, if anybody wants to read my mind, go ahead. Maybe you can help me figure out where I put my car keys. 



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Architect David Shanks outside a building he designed at the Foursquare Church in Christiansburg.

Build and build again >

Executive Summary:

Architect David Shanks has learned what it's like to build a business... he's had a lot of practice.

By Laura Purcell

"I've done career development like Mr. Magoo," says David Shanks, referencing the bespectacled cartoon character with a penchant for trouble. "I wander around, stumbling into this and that." Shanks' curiosity and willingness to try new things has led him to a long career as an architect and in small business development.

Shanks didn't set out to be an architect. He earned a bachelor's degree in physics



People need to study the market and understand what makes a business work. Some people I've told, maybe you shouldn't do this, it's not necessarily the right fit for you. You have to be willing to pay your dues.

from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, then returned home to Greensboro. With his college roommate, he opened and closed five businesses in five years. "None were particularly successful, but I did learn how to start a business," Shanks said. He began taking drafting classes at community college while working as a night auditor at a hotel, and was soon accepted into Virginia Tech's architecture program.

Starting new business ventures has remained a major theme in Shanks' life, something that never left him from his

In Brief

Name: David Shanks
Company: Owner, Cornerstone Studio Ltd, an architecture and design firm, and R.E. Bean Company, a business planning and funding firm.
Location: Christiansburg, Virginia
Education: Bachelor's degree, physics, UNC-Chapel Hill 1970. Master's degree, architecture, Virginia Tech 1980.

Greensboro days. His most recent endeavor is Cornerstone Architecture, which he began in 2013. He had worked as an independent architect with his own firm, David Shanks Architecture, since 1990, but decided to change the name because, "I wanted to build a business that might be more sellable," Shanks said.

"I feel like my job is not to sell, but to see if it meets what [clients] wanted," Shanks said, as he unfurled plans for his first project with Cornerstone—remodeling a 1950s ranch house. "The key to working with people is listening and being willing to give them



David Shanks based his design for the Tried Stone Church in Blacksburg on ancient Christian churches.



David Shanks drew inspiration for this medical office in Christiansburg from Paul Revere's Boston home.

what they want, and give them a little more, what they didn't know how to ask for," Shanks said.

When Shanks first branched into his own architecture firm in 1990, he did what many small business owners do—joined the local chambers of commerce and other local and regional business organizations in order to make connections. A friend volunteered him to work in economic development, and he found he was very interested in small business planning. Soon he was brought on to run the New River Valley Small Business Development Center, which got its start at Virginia Tech and then moved to Radford University. "In the 21 years I did that, I still did architecture part time," Shanks said. He retired from that position in 2012.

"When I left Radford, I decided I would be happiest growing a couple of businesses," Shanks said. "I've had a lot of failures in my life. I'm willing to take the risk because I've dealt with being a failure, I've gotten over that. I know that if I keep working it, it is

going to be successful. But it isn't easy."

Shanks also tries to pass forward much of the good will he's received in his career. For Shanks, practical experience has made all the difference. "I didn't know anything," he claims, when he first started out. "It was working where I learned how to do stuff."

Practical experience has helped him become a better architect and businessman, and it has also taught him important life lessons. "Something I've learned over time is you've got to be willing to fail in order to try. I think any of the businesses I first started back in Greensboro, had I not quit, could've made it. You keep learning more, fixing the mistakes, and that's how you get to be successful," Shanks said. "The agony of defeat, that's part of small business. Victory and defeat are both possibilities, and that's true of big businesses and small businesses."

"What I really like is working with people," Shanks said. "That's what makes it exciting." 

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all photos: Anne Sampson

iBroke no mo >

Executive Summary:

Jeff Maiden's iPhone / iPad repair business sprung up out of necessity.

By Anne Sampson

When Jeff Maiden, the owner of Valley iRepair, broke his iPhone screen over four years ago, he didn't know it would open a new career path. It was an inconvenience, since nobody local repaired smartphones then, and "who wants to be without their phone for two weeks, right?" he asks.

At the time, he taught biology for Roanoke City Schools at Forest Park Academy, a post he finally relinquished this spring to pursue iPhone repair full time.

"I like working with my hands, so I watched a video, and I thought I'd try to fix it on my

lunch break at school. The kids came back from lunch and my phone was in a thousand pieces on my desk. They laughed."

But the next day, he showed them a working iPhone and instantly gained credibility in the classroom. And then the requests started pouring in.

"Can you fix my iPhone? My sister's? My iPad?" They all had something broken," he says. And a part-time business was born.

Jeff is no stranger to entrepreneurship. He is familiar to many as a talented musician in popular local bands. Ten years ago he owned and operated a landscaping business.

But now Jeff is a husband and the father of a two-year-old. Some might see these circumstances as a call for conservative decisions. Jeff sees them as "time for a new adventure and an opportunity to spend time with my family."



Jeff Maiden

At 4+ years into iPhone repair, he figures he has fixed about 2000 phones to date, with some part-time help from his brother-in-law, Travis Powell. He's honed repair time down to 20 or 30 minutes.

"New iPhone models only come out every 18 months or so, which makes it easy to keep darn near any part you could need on hand," Jeff explains. Although he doesn't repair android-powered phones, precisely because there are so many of them, he's planning to offer repairs on the best-selling android, the Samsung Galaxy, as soon as he can familiarize himself with the phone.

Jeff's edge is his while-you-wait philosophy, providing his clients with speed, convenience and security.

The speed and convenience are obvious: crack your iPhone screen Monday night, make an appointment with Jeff for Tuesday

at lunch or after work, chat with him while he works the miracle and bop away with almost no smartphone downtime.

Added bonus? Your phone is never out of your sight and your precious contacts and personal data are secure. These benefits are so important to customers that they're driving from Lexington, VA and Lewisburg, WV to enjoy them. Jeff is also building a client base in the New River Valley.

A surprising plus for both Jeff and his clients is a kind of fellowship not usually associated with technology.

"When I started doing this part-time, I would meet clients at Mill Mountain Coffee (to perform the repair) and I felt like that was a weakness. It turns out it was a strength." Jeff's natural curiosity and affability, in a café setting, made getting to know his customers an integral part of the experience for everyone involved.

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"One of the most intimate things we own is the cell phone," he continues. "I like making that intimate connection with my clients."

Ready to project a more professional image, however, Valley iRepair boasts a new office at 701 Brandon Avenue, near Towers Shopping Center. A dedicated Facebook page shows photos of satisfied customers and recounts their stories, like the woman who is traveling around the world, keeping in touch with family through her iPad. User tips and popular apps are recommended, and clients ask questions and make appointments.

Jeff sees the business expanding beyond state lines someday.

"Clients are already coming from out-of-state," he says. "I've reserved a domain name. I'm ready!"



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A Kindling Success >

Executive Summary:

North Cross School in Roanoke County produces more than its fair share of graduates who end up serving their communities in formidable ways.

By Rebekah Hetzberg

A coeducational K-12 setting, North Cross School positions itself as a forerunner in a niche of educational opportunities in the Roanoke Valley. With its modest student population at just under 500 and small class size, individual attention is one of the school's staples. Since 1961, after a school merger and relocation from Salem, North Cross has been fostering growth in its student population.

I realize the height of the school's reputation when, during my meeting with Dr. Christian Proctor, the school's headmaster, he mentions the number of graduates who return to the area post secondary education to plant roots and proceed into their next phase of life. One graduate, Dr. David Trinkle, class of 1979 and

prominent leader in our community, remembers his time at North Cross: "I had good friends and good relationships with the faculty and administration."

As a civic leader now, among other occupational pursuits, David's goal is to "make sure there are opportunities [in our community] for future generations." David's community engagements include 23 years of work experience at Carilion Clinic, a current third term on Roanoke's City Council, and service as Roanoke's Vice Mayor. He is also the force behind the local Fork restaurants (Fork in the City, Fork in the Alley, Fork on the Market, Fork in the Road). To mention his accolades without acknowledging the preparation he received at North Cross would be unfortunate, given the high number of graduates who go on to contribute, in major ways, to the Roanoke region.

Like David, Stephen Lemon, class of 1980 and partner at Martin, Hopkins, & Lemon in downtown Roanoke, notes the career longevity of many members of the North Cross community. Indeed, Stephen and his daughters were taught English at North Cross by the same faculty member, and he finds this "intergenerational connection" to





North Cross within his family important.

Stephen's present involvement in the community is fueled by his passions for downtown Roanoke and conservation easement. Stephen admits, "It's rewarding to help people conserve and preserve land for the future." In addition to his role in law, Stephen has served on numerous boards, such as Downtown Roanoke, Inc. and the Taubman Museum of Art. He currently serves as President of the Roanoke Bar Association.

Not only does North Cross School herald successful graduates, North Cross engages educational programs that impact the setting in profound ways. For example, a new Global Studies program "provide[s] a unique 21st century curriculum and perspective." The program is "designed to make students more aware, capable, and interested in a globalized and interconnected world." Because of the curriculum, students receive a well-rounded education that includes international travel.

Another program, Crosswalk, helps bright students with language-based learning differences, such as dyslexia, achieve success. Within the program, the faculty "rekindle[s] student excitement for school, help[s] them regain confidence in themselves, and

challenge[s] them to exercise their strengths."

The numerous programs at North Cross help brighten the school's future and pave the way for the development of leadership and social skills within the student population. These acquired skills are crucial for advancement and success post graduation. North Cross School provides the Roanoke region with an independent school that guarantees knowledge and success during matriculation and post graduation. North Cross adds a necessary dimension to the community and gives parents a chance, and choice, to engage their child with a progressive and practical educational experience.

With 1600 alumnae, North Cross is a tight-knit and diverse community that seeks to enhance the strengths of all students. Focusing on our region allows current parents to weigh the strengths of sending their child to an independent college-preparatory school that encourages participation in athletics and the arts. North Cross "will develop character, instill values, create respect for others, and teach your children how to lead and serve." 

For additional information about North Cross School, visit www.northcross.org.





Annie Sampson

Say hello to Bollywood >

Executive Summary:

An Indian niche genre film market has arrived in Roanoke, and Vickie Holt wants you to know about it—in all its richness and color.

By **Anne Sampson**

When Vickie Holt finds something interesting, it becomes a project.

Some examples: An interest in photography turned into a long stint as the volunteer photographer for Angels of Assisi. Appreciation for a graphic novel series turned into a freelance job writing a popular storyline for the series.

You get the idea.

So when Vickie watched a few Bollywood films about a year ago, her usual MO clicked on: I want all I can get of this, and I want everyone else to know how wonderful it is.

For the uninitiated, Bollywood refers to the part of the Indian film industry based in Mumbai (Bombay). The word is a conflation of “Bombay” and “Hollywood.” Bollywood films are characterized by big production numbers. For a US equivalent, think of the great Hollywood musicals of the 1930’s and 1940’s. Update them with contemporary choreography, driving beats and provocative costumes, laced with traditional Indian music, dance and dress, and wrap all that in various romantic comedies, action dramas and stories of love, honor and loss.

“For the last 10 years, I’ve been checking out entertainment from other parts of the world,” says Vickie. “I’d been interested in looking at Bollywood, I watched a few films on Netflix, and I got hooked.”

Before long, Vickie was hosting weekly movie screenings at her apartment on Memorial Avenue.

“I thought, ‘Wouldn’t it be great if I could see one of these movies in a theater?’” she says. “The closest ones were in Richmond and D.C.,” so she hopped in the car and made two daytrips to Richmond to see movies. Her next thought was, ‘We need to get these here!’

It turns out that Carmike 10 Cinema at Tanglewood, was showing the occasional Indian film, but with no advertising. The films weren't given the kind of marketing support in the US that American-made films enjoy. Vickie even manned an info table in the theater lobby, but you've got to get people buying tickets first. What to do?

The answer: a Facebook page called Vickie's Bollywood Broadcast. Vickie posts breaking news, movie trailers, twitter feeds (she follows all the top stars) and movie reviews. Having seen about 200 films now, she provides thoughtful, considered critiques. The page shows only 285 "Likes" but some of those Likes have come from filmmakers and choreographers in India. Her DVD supplier in Hyderabad recommends her Facebook page to his customers in Europe and Asia. He says she's better informed than most Indians.

Vickie represented India at the 2014 Local Colors Festival, at the organizers' request. She was a little nervous about that – "was it quite appropriate for me to represent India?" she asks – but dove in with typical energy. Her sister helped her make braided wristlets to give away, and she was joined in the Parade of Nations by "the ladies

of the Shantiniketan Temple," where she had recently spoken about her mission.

Vickie says the response from local Indians and Pakistanis has been appreciative, and she now has support and encouragement from several prominent members of the community. She has embraced a kind of immersion in Indian culture, as far as that's possible in Roanoke. Besides learning Hindi, Vickie's clothing is a strong nod at Indian traditions, and she enjoys collecting Indian-style jewelry, some of which she orders from an Indian supplier.

Along with River Laker and GE engineer Pritesh Kasliwal, she's planning a mini-convention on September 6 at 16 West, on Church Avenue, to include a movie screening, a Bollywood dance party and a fashion show. Her ultimate goal is to bring a Bollywood film festival to Virginia, the kind that's attended by big stars and gets international coverage.

"Dhoom III was the biggest film on the planet last December – no American film even came close," she says. "Americans tend to dismiss foreign films. I want to inspire people to embrace Indian cinema and see it as a great alternative to American film." 



Bollywood



Big may not be better >

So we've all heard Aesop's fable about the tortoise and the hare. And it's a no brainer that the majority of memorable storylines from our greatest books carry some version of that same message: *slow and steady wins the race*.

But that notion is hard to embrace when it comes to economic development. Why? Because everyone wants the big score. Everyone is looking for a hero. The Fortune 500 company. The major employer. The industry that will catapult us into the new frontier. Our bold advancement into healthcare, or technology, or energy.

No one hears this cry more than the person hired for economic development.

Do you want to see big smiles and hands shaking all over the place and slaps on the back at seam-busting press conferences?

It's not going to happen from a three-man shop opening up in some guy's garage off 10th Street.

And yet there is a bit of rumbling undercurrent I've been hearing of late. Deep down, I've always known about it, but now I'm really beginning to pay more attention.

When it comes to long term sustainable progress, thriving communities aren't always the ones that are the magnets for a big industry. Detroit may be the obvious ugly poster child for this, but even supposed resource-based stalwarts like steel and railroad and coal — on up to contemporary attractions like data and high tech or even tourism and entertainment — are all beginning to hedge their bets as the age of uncertainty marches onward.

Stuart Mease, now Virginia Tech's director of career advancement, and former youth recruiter for the City of Roanoke, and I have talked about what constitutes a realistic and proven approach to economic development for at least the past decade. What gets touted as "successful" is oftentimes what may turn out to be inflated and unrewarding in the end. This happens due to the way some companies move in (and move out) and the measures and performance agreements that are established under the false promise of initial incentives.

If indeed it's true that start ups and entrepreneurs and a diversified small business base ultimately build a stronger economic hub (attracting investment, company relocations, smaller and concentrated job growth), well, we have a bit of a dilemma for the poor economic development professional. He or she isn't going to get a lot of credit. That kind of growth doesn't happen in a political term.

It's going to take a pretty selfless soul to pay more attention

continued on Page 50

On Tap from the Pub

By Tom Field

Executive Summary:
The best return on investment for long term economic development may turn out to be a bunch of small steps versus the giant leap.

The job trap >

Mainstream media and politicians have been recycling a tired and old message – there are no jobs. This is simply not true. There are jobs and plenty of them.

Instead of sympathizing with job seekers and making false promises in order to pick up a cheap vote or keep the media consumer engaged, let's ask some difficult questions of these job seekers. First, are you willing to acquire skills that are in demand by employers? Two, are you willing to humble self and take jobs "beneath" them?

There are three distinct job seekers in today's labor market—those white collar professional workers with billable skill sets, blue collar workers with or without billable skills, and the Unserviced Workforce.

The white collar crowd is being serviced by private third-party groups (headhunters). Typically their skill sets are in high demand and companies are paying a premium for their services. Professions such as health care, engineering, information technology, and accounting are all in high demand regardless of region. These workers are coveted because they will most likely drive the regional economy forward.

The blue collar crowd is being serviced by public and private third-party agencies (workforce investment boards, employment commissions, staffing agencies, etc.). Typically their skill sets are in high demand and companies try to create a pool of candidates to become trained to perform these jobs. Professions such as manufacturing, technicians, trades, and distribution and call centers are all in high demand. These workers are coveted because they can stall the regional economy from moving forward.

The Unserviced Workforce is caught in the middle. Neither the public nor private sector is serving this group. The private sector cannot generate revenue off of this crowd and the public sector is ill-equipped to help them.

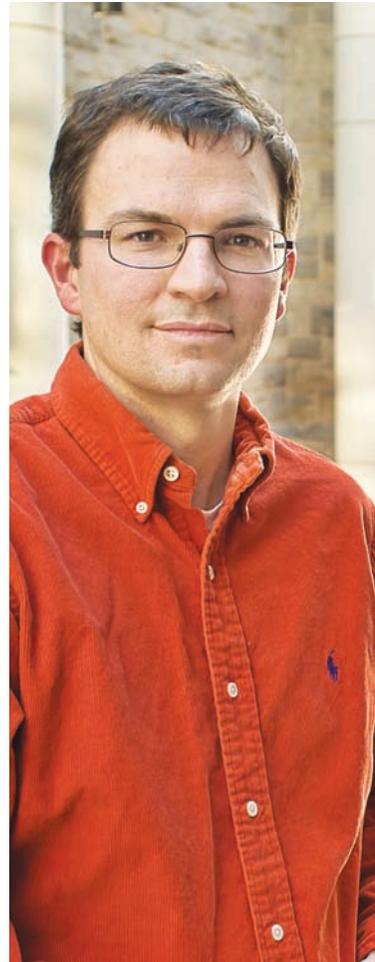
The Unserviced Workforce can be defined as: younger with potential or upside; has some form of higher education; has good skill sets, but not billable skill sets, which are in demand; and are looking for a "professional" job paying a livable wage depending on the region. This is the critical mass of knowledge workers who are underemployed, overeducated, and are struggling to realize the return on investment in furthering their education.

So how do we help the Unserviced Workforce? Here are seven outcomes that sums up just about every member of this group.

Outcome #1: Acquire new skills to move up

This will require continuing education and a commitment to the acquisition of these demanded skills. Higher education institutions are key in providing the right training to obtain the right skills

continued on Page 50



Stuart Mease

Guest Commentary

By Stuart Mease

Executive Summary:

When it comes to recovering from a job loss and finding a new one, one must be proactive—and that's likely to involve a significant change to meet today's market.

Field / On Tap

from Page 48

to a guy in a six year old van over a corporate Learjet full of shiny executives.

I have to say, though, I like the picture we paint when the model involves diversity and options and multi-industry. As much as I love our railroad, the roundhouse spun that engine and all its great cars on out of here. Have we learned a lesson?

Stuart wonders what would happen if we take a million dollars of economic development money and put it into entrepreneurial startups and even existing businesses verses public relation splashes to court large corporations. I wonder, too.

He says there is plenty of data suggesting that this is exactly the way budgets should be allocated.

I'll take it even a step further by asking the simplest question: What would it hurt? And isn't the building up of resources you currently maintain going to create a stronger magnet for any large companies that would ultimately come here anyway?

Isn't real going to be more attractive than pretend?

At least the approach would be simpatico with that other memorable fable-esque notion: we wouldn't be *putting all our eggs into one basket*. 🐣

Guest Commentary

from Page 49

that the private sector needs to grow. Alignment is crucial.

Outcome #2: Humble oneself and move down

This will require performing multiple jobs moving forward, accepting a lower standard of living, and realizing there is a surplus of people with the same skills in the labor market.

Outcome #3: Start a business

This will require taking more risk by starting small while still looking for a job, going to school

or working a platform job, and identifying many public/private programs to assist you.

Outcome #4: Move laterally between jobs in the Unserviced Workforce

These people will most likely not make an investment in continuing education or start a business. They may think they are better than blue collar jobs. Typically younger, these workers will bounce from job to job and not "get ahead." They'll stay stuck in the mud. This appears to be the most likely of all the outcomes.

Outcome #5: Remain unemployed

These people are still not humbled or motivated to get out of the unserviced workforce because they are waiting for the economy to turn around and/or are family/spouse/government supported.

Outcome #6: Move or leave the region

These people believe "it's not me" but the place I live that's the problem. They are typically unattached or younger and are more capable of leaving or are forced to leave due to the severity of the regional economy. Often this group's dream of finding Mr. or Mrs. Right as the solution to their job and financial woes has not been realized in their current region.

Outcome #7: Retire early, if able

These people are focused on years of work experience rather than result-based metrics. They are frustrated by perceived age discrimination in the recruiting process. They will re-enter the workforce at a later time, perhaps working only part-time. Their decision depends on their nest egg and lifestyle.

Are you a member of the Unserviced Workforce? If so, what's your outcome?

Do you know someone struggling in the Unserviced Workforce? Get them moving in the right direction.

I challenge you to get out of the Unserviced Workforce by seeking Outcomes 1, 2 or 3. Inaction will leave you in Outcomes 4 and 5, and a poor attitude results in Outcomes 6 and 7.

There are jobs available and plenty of them. No public or private-sector program is going to create a job market equilibrium. It's solely up to the job seeker to stay out of the Unserviced Workforce. 🐣

Letters

They like us, they really do

The Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau (RVCVB) just received a copy of the July 2014 issue of Points North Atlanta magazine illustrating this incredible spread and article touting Virginia's Blue Ridge. The article was generated as a result of a media tour conducted by the RVCVB/ Geiger & Associates public relations team.

Catherine Fox
RVCVB

Publisher's Note: The Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau has an excellent archive of various media exposure and news recently published elsewhere about our region as a point of destination/ attraction at: www.visitroanokeva.com/press-media-room/recent-coverage/

Send letters to news@vbFRONT.com or any FRONT contact of your choosing (page 6). Submissions may be edited. You can see, read, print any current or back issue online at www.vbFRONT.com

“ ”
It shot to the top pf the Apple iTunes App Store charts.

— Page 33

“ ”
The kids came back... and my phone was in a thousand pieces on my desk. They laughed.

— Page 41

Reach Out!



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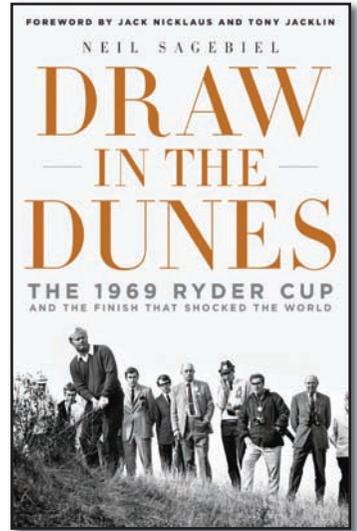
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Books @ the FRONT >

Following are book recommendations from our contributors and business people in the Roanoke and New River Valleys who are inveterate readers. Readers are invited to submit short reviews of books you've read during the past six months. Our goal is to recommend good books on any topic and in any genre. Send reviews to news@vbFRONT.com



Another upset

Floyd's Neil Sagebiel's *Draw in the Dunes: The 1969 Ryder Cup and the Finish That Shocked the World* (Thomas Dunne Publishing) is his second book two years and again it deals with an historic finish in a major event. The event itself is at the center of the book, but it is Neil's understanding of the period, the culture, the golf culture and the importance of the Ryder Cup that give the book its irresistible flavor. His first major non-fiction work was *The Longest Shot*, the story of Jack Fleck's victory over Ben Hogan's victory in the 1955 U.S. Open and like his newest, it was a sit-on-the-edge-of-the-chair read.

Neil, who writes a nationally prominent golf blog, takes golf out of the realm of sport and into something more akin to anthropology with his works. *The Longest Shot* was named one of the best sports books of 2012 and my guess is Neil's new work won't be far behind that. The foreword was written by Jack Nicklaus and Tony Jacklin.

—Dan Smith

Shite full of dysfunction

The dialogue alone is worth the snogging into Tana French's *Faithful Place* (Viking; 2010). After the explosion of detective shows on American television, I've pretty much had my fill of the genre and its spillover into cheap paperback overkill.

But our show here, in inner city Dublin tenement housing rows is worth the indulgence. The story is quite similar to the expected TV script, though the twist at the end is not so surprising. Fortunately, you don't need to read this novel for the plot. It's the setting, the characters, and yes, the rather slap-snappy dialogue between members of our dysfunctional family, complete with Irish colours. Among all the fabulous colloquialisms and words (ma, da, fecking, arse), my favorite was the use of the simple contraction "amn't" as in "If I cared about him, amn't I supposed to cry?".

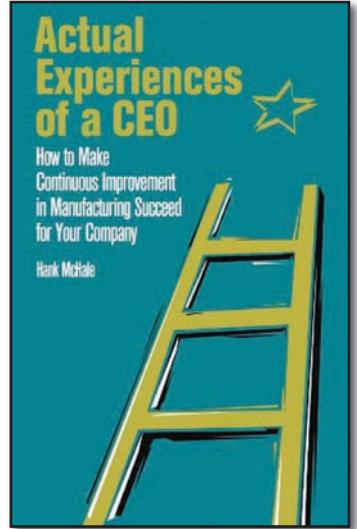
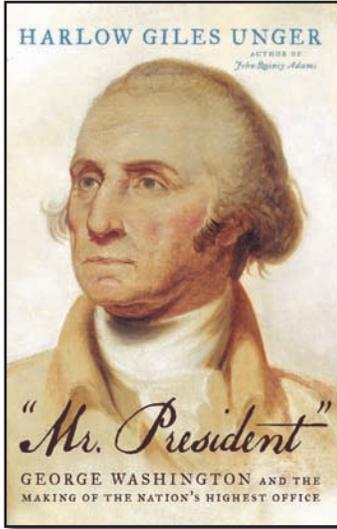
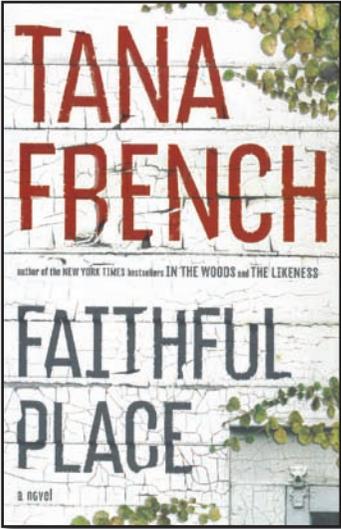
The exchanges between our detective Frank and his ma and da represent the best part of this story. You hear the noise. You feel the constant need to move away from it all. And you even smell it.

French's writing isn't gritty, but it is exceptional in its ability to smack you right upside the face in quick bursts, causing your brow to furrow even as you brush the insult aside so you can be a big boy and move on. She's pretty much a master at reconstructing a mood where you're defenseless in changing.

—Tom Field

Presidential constraints

Politicians today ask what our President should do without action by Congress. If they changed the question to what would George Washington have done, the answer



astonishes. Washington established what Harlow Giles Unger calls in *Mr. President: George Washington and the Making of the Nation's Highest Office* (Da Capo; 2013) the pillars of presidential power and precedent by assuming power only implied by the Constitution. Washington had run a multimillion dollar (by today's money value) estate, led the revolutionary army that won independence, and presided over the creation of the new Constitution.

So he knew what needed to be done.

A vivid example came with the problems caused by Citizen Genet, a French minister who arrived in America with secret orders to overthrow our government. Only a yellow fever epidemic finally saved the day. After a brisk recap of the workings of the constitutional convention, Unger carefully illustrates in clear prose the details of how and why the pillars came to be. Reading this excellent book, your admiration for Washington and your understanding of executive power grows.

—Priscilla Richardson

A real digger

The PowerPoint-like cover graphic on Hank McHale's book, *Actual Experiences of a CEO: How to Make Continuous Improvement in Manufacturing Succeed for Your Company* (ASQC; 2014) shows the rather clichéd ladder reaching upwards to star. That's fine—we want to emphasize the positive. However, dig

into the book for more than a few minutes, and I wonder if the graphic shouldn't be more, shall we say, down to earth. At the bottom of the ladder, underneath it, actually. That's because McHale's advice throughout this instructional and informative report is all about digging deep. Looking for root causes (into why you may not be more profitable than you are).

An analytical and well-formatted approach to developing a better continuous improvement system (especially directed at manufacturing and industrial operations), this book does the very thing most C-level executives want: it gives examples. Among the showcased case studies, McHale substantiates his conclusions with ample charts and graphs. This book will serve as more than a primer to anyone considering the author's consulting services (see our profile in this month's Financial FRONT). But the message from the former CEO is clear: You can't reach your highest until you've dug your deepest.

—Tom Field

(The reviewers: Dan Smith is a Roanoke writer, blogger and veteran journalist; Tom Field is a creative director and publisher of FRONT; Priscilla Richardson, MA, JD, is author of *Speak Don't Freak: Six Secrets of Mastering the Fear of Speaking*, now available at Amazon.com)



Roanoke Kiwanis Club

FORE the children >

Kiwanis Club of Roanoke held its Eliminate Golf Tournament at Roanoke Country Club on June 13, which raised over \$9,000 in funds for Kiwanis International and UNICEF for tetanus inoculations to mothers and babies in developing nations.



Tom Field

Greenway sequential >

Like the retro-iconic Burma Shave advertising signs (1920s–1960s), Roanoke River Greenway has its own version of small sequential “roadside” signs as part of its campaign for greenway etiquette. This one (above) reads 'You're wearing cycling shoes / You've got your cycling pants / But remember as you cruise / This ain't the Tour de France'

Valley Business FRONT is FRONT'n About at many events each month. Check the blog links at www.vbFRONT.com for more coverage.

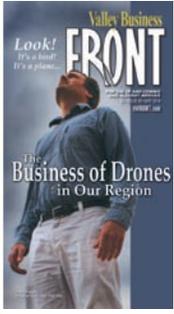
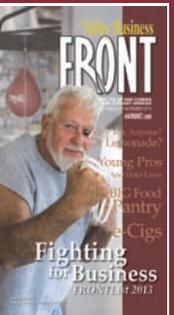
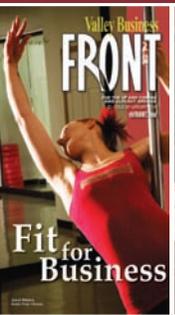
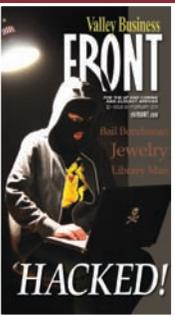
Fair ball >

Two summertime Salem traditions are captured in July; the annual Salem Fair, and the perspective (as the photograph was taken from the upper level of Salem Red Sox baseball stadium).



Hamburger square >

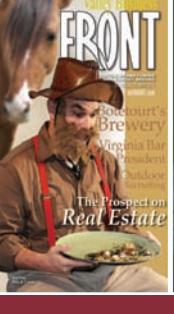
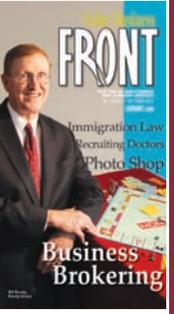
Roanoke's first ever **Big Lick Burger Fest** was held downtown on July 12. Eleven local restaurants and food trucks offered over 40 combinations to more than 2,000 people, according to organizers.



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By the Numbers

Our Foreign-Born Neighbors, Young and Not-So Young >

By Anne Piedmont

If you need an example of how statewide statistics often do not reflect the demographic reality of the Roanoke and New River Valleys, look no further than the data surrounding Virginia's foreign-born population. Just over five percent of the region's residents were born outside the United States, almost 40 percent of them in Asia, according to the 2008-12 American Community Survey.

Much like their fellow foreign-born Virginians, those in the Roanoke and Blacksburg MSAs are older than 18, though they are slightly more likely to be younger in this region. They are fairly evenly divided between males and females, with the Roanoke Valley skewing

male and the New River Valley, female.

Statewide, the median age of the foreign born is older than the average. In the combined region, the average is the opposite. In Botetourt and Craig counties, the median age of the foreign born is older than for the total population, perhaps owing the fact that they tend to be overwhelmingly European-born who likely moved here many years ago.

Like the overall population, the foreign-born in the New River Valley (home to two large universities) tend to be younger than those in the Roanoke Valley. While Montgomery County and Radford still have strong majorities over age 18, the low median ages indicate that they are not very much older than that, and many of them are probably students.

Why is important to know the ages of our foreign-born neighbors and co-workers? With few exceptions, they are in our workforce and their children are in our schools. As the annual Local Colors Festival in Roanoke City demonstrates, the diversity of our native backgrounds adds a richness to the community and makes the region more desirable to foreign-owned companies looking for new plant locations.

	Foreign-Born	% Over 18 Male	% Over 18 Female	Median Age Male	Med. Age Female	Media Age Total
Botetourt Co.	634	99.5%	94.3%	54.5	51.1	45.0
Craig Co.	16	92.8%	100.0%	65.4	65.5	45.0
Franklin Co.	1,553	86.8%	86.8%	43.7	33.9	44.3
Roanoke Co.	4,729	87.6%	87.9%	38.3	41.4	42.9
Roanoke City	6,276	89.7%	85.4%	34.6	32.7	38.4
Salem	1,280	88.6%	93.7%	39.6	38.4	39.8
Roanoke MSA	14,488	88.9%	87.7%	37.9	39.0	41.7
Floyd County	192	100.0%	100.0%	59.0	33.7	44.2
Giles Co.	209	80.8%	92.8%	43.8	46.4	43.0
Montgomery Co.	8,358	93.1%	92.5%	26.9	29.6	26.5
Pulaski Co.	507	100.0%	93.9%	44.8	37.3	44.2
Radford	956	91.1%	100.0%	22.4	21.6	21.9
Blacksburg MSA	10,222	93.1%	93.5%	27.3	29.5	31.3
Combined MSAs	24,710	90.7%	90.0%			
Virginia	893,174	92.4%	92.8%	39.6	41.3	37.5



K.C. Huong: “I am a good eater, not a good cook.”

A helping hand >

Executive Summary:

Former restaurateur K.C. Huong has moved into real estate these days, but his goal of helping others remains at the center of it all.

By Dan Smith

K.C. Huong learned long ago that the American dream he sought when he immigrated to the U.S. 30 years ago is a whole lot easier to find at the end of an education. It doesn't much matter what the education focuses on, either.

His degree in electronics at a Taiwan university has served only to open doors which led to

the food industry and commercial real estate, hardly what he was thinking about when he was staying up all night getting ready for exams.

In China, where Huong still has strong and deep contacts, a child's educational future is often decided for him while he is still very young. “They are selected early and some evolve later,” he says. That often means that late developers are left behind. Huong notes that while trying to help Chinese kids find a spot in U.S. universities (and helps our universities zero in on promising students). It is, he says, a way of repaying the good fortune he has had. “There is less choice, less creativity in China,” he says.

Pearl Fu, a sort of queen of the immigrant in the Roanoke Valley and organizer of the



Dan Smith

In Brief

- Name:** K.C. Huong
(rhymes with “song”)
- Age:** 53
- Company:** KCH Investments, owner
- Type of Business:** Real estate investing
- Background:** Native of Taiwan, immigrated to the U.S. in 1982. Married for 23 years with two children (daughter studying to be a pharmacist, son at Virginia Tech in civil engineering). Degree in electronics. Former co-owner and co-founder of Roanoke’s three Szechuan restaurants.

there for six years, absorbing all he could and when he moved to Roanoke, he and chef Tsei Chen opened Szechuan restaurant, which grew to three over the years.

“Customer service was my experience,” he says. “I learned to have an open mind, to please them. I am a good eater, not a good cook.” Chen took care of the latter. In 2002, the long hours and time away from his young family became more of a sacrifice than he wanted to make, so he turned to real estate where he could set more realistic and predictable hours.

“I am good at calculating numbers,” he says. “Regardless of the business, you have to learn every day, you have to know the market. When I was in the restaurant business, I talked to a lot of customers about their business and I pay attention to what they said. In real estate, it’s simple: watch expenses and income and always provide good service.”

Huong has about 20 tenants in his buildings in Cave Spring, Salem and Southwest Roanoke County. He looks for tenants that impress him with their business model and goals. “I try to open myself to all kinds of businesses,” he says. That often means getting involved with them. Something he doesn’t hesitate to do. 

wildly popular Local Colors, says Huong “is compassionate and civic minded. I always contact him to help Chinese newcomers in the valley.”

The help is not just limited to the Chinese, however. He leases space in a number of his businesses and often serves as a mentor—or even business partner—to some of his tenants. “I nursery them,” he says in broken, but easily-understood English. “I always try to work something out with them” if there is an impediment to starting their business. “I’ve even helped buy equipment in the beginning. Often they don’t know business; they just have a skill.”

He knows business, learned it the hard way by starting in the kitchen of a Texas restaurant washing dishes. He worked

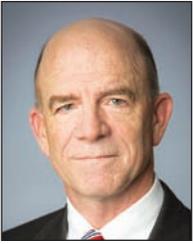
Career FRONT

FINANCIAL FRONT



Price

Elizabeth Price has been promoted to loan officer at Primary Residential Mortgage in Roanoke.



Gilchrist

Vic Gilchrist has been named commercial banking relationship manager at Sun Trust Bank.

Steve Hildebrand has joined as marketing specialist and **Matt Zimmerman** has joined as business development officer at Freedom First Credit Union.

Dee Dee Burgoyne was promoted to residential construction lender and senior consumer lending officer at HomeTown Bank.

Andy Carroll has joined MassMutual Financial Group in Roanoke.

Edward Link and **Michael Kemp** have been promoted to senior

portfolio managers at UBS Financial Services, Inc.

Karen Hankins has joined HomeTown Bank Mortgage as senior mortgage banker.

Carrie McConnell has been promoted to senior vice president commercial lender and **Kristin Routt** has been promoted to assistant vice president / branch manager at HomeTown Bank.

John Register has joined Ameriprise Financial Services as a financial advisor.

LEGAL FRONT

The Roanoke Bar Association has elected its new officers: **Richard Maxwell**, president; **Joseph Mott**, president-elect; **Hugh Wellons**, secretary/ treasurer; **Stephen Lemon**, past president; and **Daniel Frankl**, **Kevin Holt**, **Machel Janoschka**, **Patrick Kenney**, **James O'Keeffe**, directors.

Douglas Densmore and **Tara Branscom** have joined CowanPerry PC as attorneys.

Audra Marcum has joined Frankl Miller & Webb as a litigation associate.

WELLNESS FRONT

Janine Underwood has been named

executive director of Bradley Free Clinic.



Slagel

Ashley Slagel, LSW, LMSW has joined Community Health Center of the New River Valley.

Pam Rickard has been named development director at Franklin County YMCA.

TECH/INDUSTRY FRONT

Bacova has announced the following appointments: **Jeff Norden**, vice president, marketing and national accounts; **Christine Workowski**, designer/ photographer; **Deseray Chaplin**, product manager; **Tamara Hill**, marketing and quality control specialist.

DEVELOPMENT FRONT



Williams

Jack White has joined S.C. Rossi & Co. as director of operations.

Patrick Williams



Jimerson

received his registration as a Professional Engineer and **Emily Jimerson** received her certification as a licensed architect in Virginia (AIA) at SFCS.



Gutshall

Price Gutshall has joined Cushman & Wakefield | Thalhimers as a sales and leasing associate.

Beth Brown and **Tammy Peck** have joined Gwyn & Harmon as real estate agents.

Chris Chittenden, **Megan Roschelli**, **Terry Vangelos** and **Yan Yang** have joined Coldwell Banker Townside / Blacksburg as real estate agents.



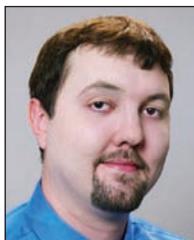
Greer

Donna Greer has been named manager of Long & Foster

Real Estate's Smith Mountain Lake office.



Allen



Boyd



Brunwasser



Cross



Johns

Alesha Allen, Michael Boyd, Allison Brunwasser, Glen Cross, Tamara Johns, Lynn Martin, Lori McCarren, Hunter Moore, Stacey



Martin



McCarren



Moore



Richardson

Richardson and Christine Whittaker have joined Long & Foster Real Estate office in Roanoke as sales associates.

Matt Gaziano has



Whittaker



Gaziano

joined Cushman & Wakefield | Thalheimer Roanoke office specializing in industrial sales and leasing.

Chad Thomas has been appointed principal of Mattern & Craig.

RETAIL/SERVICE FRONT



Allen

David Allen has been appointed senior vice president, supply chain management for



Spencer

Advance Auto Parts.

Rachel Spencer has been promoted to director of research and head of the new research division at Access Advertising & Public Relations.

EDUCATION FRONT

Aaron Fetrow has been named vice president of student affairs at Roanoke College



Culver

Steven Culver has been named assistant provost for assessment and evaluation at Virginia Tech.

Stephen Biscotte has been named

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Career FRONT



Biscotte

coordinator of the general education initiative at Virginia Tech.



Simmons



Blanco

Angela Simmons has been named assistant vice president for student affairs at Virginia Tech.

Myra Blanco has been named director of automated vehicle technologies at Virginia Tech Transportation Institute.

CULTURE FRONT

David Crane has been hired as executive

director for the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra.

OTHER FRONTS

AAF Roanoke advertising club has announced its 2014-2015 board: **Matt Brown**, president; **Jamal Millner**, vice-president/diversity; **Caitlin Mitchell**, Ad 2 president; **Colleen Dresser**, treasurer; **Leigh Anne Kelley**, secretary/club achievement; **Chris Dodd**, awards gala/government relations; **John Cornthwait**, awards judging; **Patrick Carrell**, communications; **Liz Munn-Lively**, fundraising/auction; **Jarett Henshaw**, membership; **Tom Field**, programs; **Stefanie Brown**, public service; **Chris West**, sponsorships.

Daniel R. O'Donnell has been appointed interim county administrator for Roanoke County.



Oldham

The Center for Innovation and



Maggard

Entrepreneurship (CIE) at Virginia Tech's Pamplin College of Business has appointed **Linda Oldham** as executive director and **Derick Maggard** as director.



Waugh

Joyce Waugh, president of the Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce has been installed president of the Virginia Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (VACCE).

Nancy Howell Agee, CEO of Carilion Clinic, and **Abney S. Boxley, III**, president of Boxley Materials, have been inducted into the Southwest Virginia Business Hall of Fame.

Tom Tanner of Roanoke Regional Small Business

Development Center was named Virginia Small Business Development Center Network's State Star for 2014.



Cutler



Pharis



Brown

The Blue Ridge Land Conservancy has named its 2014-2015 officers and board: **Dr. M. Rupert Cutler**, president; **Linda Pharis**, vice president; **Whitney H. Feldmann**, secretary; **F. Fulton Galer**, treasurer; **George Kegley**, returning board member; and newcomers to the board of trustees **C.**

Read the FRONT online **vbFRONT.com**

Also get more stories and pictures at **morefront.blogspot.com**



Dunkenberger

Whitney Brown, Jr., and **Thomas M. Dunkenberger**.

The Western Virginia Workforce Development board has elected/re-elected the following: **Joyce Kessinger**, chair; **Joseph Brinley**, vice chair and oversight; **Bill Jones, Jr.**,



Sullivan

treasurer; **Lawrence Musgrove, III**, secretary; **Hiawatha Nicely**, immediate past chair; **Paul Paradzinski**, youth council chair.

New River Valley Planning District Commission has elected the following officers for the



East



Carpenter

upcoming year: **Kevin Sullivan**, chair; **Greg East**,



Patton

vice chair; **Scott Weaver**, treasurer; **Joe Carpenter**, member at large; **Mike Patton**, past chair.

Compiled by Tom Field

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FRONT Notes



Brian Batteiger volunteering with Pathways for Greenways

Green for green

Brian Batteiger of Roanoke was recognized for his volunteering service by the 2014 Virginia Cox Conserves Heroes Program with a \$10,000 donation to his nonprofit of choice, Pathways for Greenways.

WalMart in the hood

WalMart has announced the planned opening of three WalMart Neighborhood Markets in the Roanoke area, including the reuse of sites at the old Kroger store at Orange Avenue and King Street, the former Parts Depot warehouse at Dale Avenue and Vernon Street, and the old

Winn-Dixie at Plantation Road and John Richardson Road. The smaller stores join WalMart's current supercenters at Valley View Mall, Bonsack area, Clearbrook area, and Salem.

NetVentures acquired

Roanoke-based software company NetVentures (known for its member management systems for YMCAs) has been acquired by Daxco software of Birmingham, Alabama.

VTC accredited

Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine has received full accreditation

from two organizations; the school just graduated its first class this year.

Well opens

The Well—a natural foods grocery and herbal supplement store—has opened at 1764 Patriot Lane in Bedford. Owners Adam Markham (from Roanoke store Tinnell's) and wife Kendal, describe the new store as “a cross between the Roanoke Co-Op and a GNC.”

Live in Roanoke

The City of Roanoke was recognized with the Outstanding Achievement Award for 2014 for its “Parks & Arts” program by City Livability awards

program at the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

Stegar's Swiss villa

The Center of European Studies in Riva San Vitale, Switzerland has been renamed the Stegar Center for International Scholarship, after the former and recently retired Virginia Tech president Charles W. Stegar.

Vacancy or No

Virginia's delegates and public officials continue to debate the issue of the defunct Virginia Intermont College being used as a temporary facility hosting immigrant minors entering the U.S. illegally. Virginia

Intermont has been identified as a possible site for refugees, among the expected increase from children crossing from the Mexican border.

Banding broadly

The Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority is considering a proposal to install more than 60 miles of fiber-optic cable over Roanoke, Botetourt County, Salem to improve broadband access. Blue Ridge Advisory Services of North Carolina is developing the plan.

12th place

Virginia ranks 12th in the U.S. for overall economic performance, according to the annual *Enterprising States* report from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. Last year, the report ranked Virginia at number 5.

Chemsohv fined

Chemsohv, a chemical distribution company in the Roanoke Industrial Center was fined \$612,339 for improper storage, according to EPA announcement. The company plans to appeal, citing the waste in question was planned for recycling purposes.

Radford's big building consolidation

Radford University has begun construction on its new College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences

building, a \$53 million, 143,600-square-foot facility which will house about ten programs/departments, including the office of the dean, that were once housed in seven different buildings.

Tack us up as number 4

Online referral business Thumbtack has ranked Virginia fourth in the country for "business friendly" just behind Utah, Idaho, and Texas.

Truck upgrade

The Volvo New River Valley truck assembly plant in Dublin has announced a \$69 million investment in new equipment, processes, and plant redesign to increase its painting capacity, among other improvements.

City trees

Researchers from Virginia Tech are leading Urban Forestry 2020, a multi-state, multi-university project that examines the challenges faced by the urban forestry profession, which includes the management of trees and green spaces in populated communities, under the disciplines of urban planning, landscape architecture and civil engineering.

College savings milestone

The Virginia 529 College Savings Plan has surpassed \$50 billion in managed assets this

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year, serving 1.4 million account owners in-state and out-of-state.

Post office woes

Roanoke is losing its primary mail processing facility and an estimated 400 jobs that would move the operations to Greensboro as soon as January. According to the U.S. Postal Service, the closing is one of 82 targeted for consolidation

and will reduce operating costs by \$750 million a year.

Bicycle friendly

USA Today listed "Roanoke Valley, VA" as one of ten best bike-friendly cities in the United States in its special feature for July. Along with the "duo cities Hayward and Cable, Wisconsin," ours was the only other regional



Researchers from Virginia Tech are leading Urban Forestry 2020

FRONT Notes



RU Nursing

designation. The other eight city locations included Austin, TX; Boulder, CO; Jackson Hole, WY; Louisville, KY; Minneapolis, MN; Portland, OR; San Diego, CA; and Tucson, AZ.

BSN at RU from VCCS

Radford University has signed a guaranteed admissions agreement for Virginia Community College System A.A.S. Nursing graduates to transfer into its B.S. Nursing degree program.

Reduced vision

ITT Exelis has eliminated approximately 60 jobs

from its plant in Roanoke County. Citing defense budget cuts and reduced military involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq, the company has laid off more than 600 employees since 2011.

Apartment change

Westwind I and II apartment complex in Roanoke has been sold by HHHunt to Richmond-based Medalist Properties for a reported \$13 million.

Bedford hospital single owned

Centra has purchased the remaining half of

its half-owned Bedford Memorial Hospital from Carilion Clinic for a reported \$11 million. The hospital employees approximately 300, and the sale also includes Oakwood Health and Rehabilitation Center.

Move over 12 more inches

A new law in Virginia increases the distance from two feet to three feet for a vehicle passing a bicyclist.

Open wide

After years of planning, New Horizons Healthcare in Roanoke is opening

its dental clinic. The organization is interviewing dentists and plans to open in September.

Amherst clinic

Centra Health is opening an urgent care center behind the Ambriar Shopping Center in Amherst.

Nearly a decade of credit

Roanoke County Department of Economic Development has been designated an Accredited Economic Development Organization (AEDO) by the International Economic Development

Council (IEDC); a continuous designation since 2004.

Sinkland rising

After its recent construction of a new facility, Christiansburg's Sinkland Farms has announced plans to increase its scheduling of additional entertainment, educational and special events.

Roanoke refreshed

Roanoke Regional Partnership has launched its redesigned website: Roanoke.org to consolidate information resources and "attract people, jobs, and investment" in the region.

Piping through

A letter of intent has been released regarding the Mountain Valley Pipeline, a 330 mile natural gas pipeline crossing from northwestern West Virginia through Giles, Pulaski, Montgomery, Floyd, and Franklin counties to Pittsylvania County. The project involves a partnership between EQT Corp. of Pittsburgh and NextEra Energy of Juno Beach, Fla.

Averett DCC collaboration

Averett University announced a partnership with Danville Community

College whereby current students who plan to continue their education at Averett can take one class per semester at DCC tuition rates.

LUCOM launches

A new Osteopathic School of Medicine has launched at Liberty University, with its first class of D.O. degrees expected in Spring 2018.

Developers buys NBB

Blacksburg's Clay Court and Brownstone developer Steve Hill won the winning bid of \$630,000 for the National Bank of Blacksburg.

Rebel flag withdrawn

Washington and Lee University has removed Confederate battle flags from its campus in response to protests by a group of law students.

VALET grads

Ten companies from across the Commonwealth have graduated from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership's (VEDP) Virginia Leaders in Export Trade (VALET) Program, including three from our region: Aeroprobe Corporation of Montgomery County; Donoma Software of Bedford County; Neuman Aluminium

Impact Extrusion Inc. of Waynesboro. The program assists exporters that have firmly established domestic operations and are committed to international exporting as an expansion strategy.

Fiber in Pulaski

Hardie Building Products in Pulaski is investing \$25 million to expand its manufacturing capacity. An international supplier of fiber-cement siding for the construction industry, the company expects to add about 70 new jobs.

Popular library site for sale

Roanoke County is accepting proposals for the purchase or lease of the former 419 library building. The 20,690 square foot facility was built in 1972, is zoned C-1, and sits next to one of the city's highest annual daily traffic counts at 25,000.

South Boston Long & Foster

Long & Foster Real Estate has opened a new office in South Boston at 3510 Old Halifax Road.

Harmony expands

Roanoke-based Harmony Senior Services is constructing seven new

senior living communities in Virginia and South Carolina, including the first site scheduled for early 2015 in Blacksburg.

More buses

Roanoke's Valley Metro has introduced nine new diesel buses to its fleet.

JDSU at Bridges

Network systems company JDSU is the first corporate tenant to The Bridges new mixed-use development site at the foot of Mill Mountain in Roanoke. About 75 employees will move from the current Roanoke County office at Valleypointe to the new "Trolley Barn" portion of the complex.

Red Sox tickets downtown

In a trial run to see if it meets public demand, Salem Red Sox tickets have been made available for purchase at the box office at Roanoke's downtown Center in the Square.

Harrisonburg Goodwill

Goodwill has opened a new store at 2025 East Market Street in Harrisonburg.

Compiled by Tom Field

**Additional FRONT Notes posted online at moreFRONT.blogspot.com.
Read extended versions of items listed above, plus photos and many more current listings each day on the [moreFRONT](http://moreFRONT.com) blog, also available by link at vbFRONT.com.**

CONTRIBUTORS

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events for 15 years. Her work highlights the sights and people of the Roanoke Valley. She specializes in fresh looks at familiar subjects. [sampsom7@gmail.com]

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“ ”
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recidivism is employment — Page 29

“ ”
Her next thought was ‘we
need to get these here!’ — Page 46

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