

Valley Business FRONT

THE SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEUR
CHAMPION IN VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE
FREE • ISSUE 95 • AUGUST 2016

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All About the Team



Lisa Seifred,
MKB Realtors



GOAL: GET BACK IN THE STRIPES.

Doug Moore thought his brain tumor would keep him from refereeing sports games and living an active life. Our doctors thought differently. To see how our team worked together to help Doug reach his goal, visit CarilionClinic.org/Goals.

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WELCOME to the FRONT

The Roanoke Valley Association of Realtors reports homes sales "at levels the region has not seen since before the recession." The New River Valley Association of Realtors cites state statistics showing Eastern and Southwest Virginia as the regions experiencing the "most significant jumps" in second quarter 2016 home sales.

The real estate market in our region is finally stirring at noticeable levels since that most rough mark in 2008. Property valuations haven't risen to match other economic indicators yet (which is a plus for buyers, particularly in the used housing market), but there is finally some measureable activity and reason to be optimistic. That's the general consensus amongst our real estate agents.

The "team" approach to selling real estate is hardly a new phenomenon, but in our market the individual agent is still the majority option by far. But it's interesting to note that the teams you do see out there, tend to be the byproduct of only the exceptionally successful agents. It's a model embraced by our FRONTcover story subjects; and in their case, the better way to capitalize on the improving trend.

Teams are really just a compilation of individuals; so if you're a buyer or a seller, you've got plenty of options for agents. And you're better off now than eight years ago.



Tom Field

“ ‘Tis better to be
alone than in bad
company — Page 15

“ We had a choice...we chose to stay
— Page 59

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FIVE for One

& ONE for Five

8

DEPARTMENTS

**Celebrating Pearisburg's 16
local flavor**

**Insurance Agents in 26
the dot com age**

**An entrepreneurial 30
catalyst**

**A glimpse of the 37
experience**

**A tech hot spot— 58
and cold**

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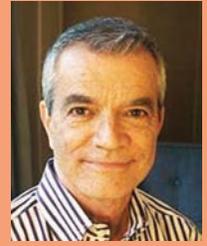
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AUGUST



Emily Alberts



Dan Dowdy



Nick Hart



Mike Leigh



Anne Sampson



Kathy Surace

Editorial Advisory Board

Valley Business FRONT has organized an Editorial Advisory Board in order to help direct coverage. FRONT selected a group of 14 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. "They 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



Tom Field



Keith Finch



Kathleen Harshberger



Ariel Lev



Christine Liana



Christiana Marjakangas



Nicholas Vaassen

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 42.

2016 Members

Nancy Agee Carilion (Wellness)
Laura Bradford Claire V (Retail)
Nicholas C. Conte Carilion (Legal)
Warner Dalhouse Retired (Seniors)
John Garland Garland Properties (Development)
Nancy Gray Hollins University (Education)
Ellis Gutshall Valley Bank (Finance)
Nanci Hardwick Aeroprobe (Tech/Industry)
George Kegley Retired (Seniors)
John D. Long National D-Day Memorial (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.

“

Europe has
Finland and
Greece; the
U.S. has
Maine and
New Mexico

— Page 41

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Blog: morefront.blogspot.com



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CURTIS BURCHETT
354-6323



FIVE for One & ONE for Five



After Curtis Burchett, a Realtor/Owner at MKB Realtors, partnered with Realtor Sonya Dickinson on several productive real estate transactions, he said, "Why don't we stop dating and just get married?"

Full disclosure: They both were, and still are, happily married to other people.

Curtis meant that he and Sonya should form a real estate team, a trend that appeared in the 1990s as an alternative to working with an individual agent, and remains popular today. Although opinions about the efficiency of the team model fall on both sides of the fence, the team that has grown to be known as Burchett, Dickinson, Payne and Associates speaks with something like passion about this approach to business.

"There's strength in numbers," says Rick Payne, who joined the team about 12 years ago. "The collaborative approach adds value for the consumer."



Teamwork in real estate >

Executive Summary:
The team model works well for the real estate agents at Burchett, Dickinson, Payne and Associates.

By Anne Sampson



With a team approach, the client gets the best of both worlds: a Realtor contact who handles communication and service, and the expertise and backup of the entire group.

The team consists of Curtis, Sonya, Rick Payne, Norm Pullen and Lisa Seifred. Each brings an area of expertise to the table without limiting their work to those areas. Curtis knows Southwest Roanoke County, while Sonya focuses on Smith Mountain Lake. Rick Payne has many investor clients, and Norm Pullen, the newest and youngest team member, focuses on millennial clients. Lisa Seifred is The Glue, tracking the team's transactions, maintaining communications and addressing issues.



"It's controlled chaos," Lisa says with a smile. She maintains a whiteboard (known as "The Board") for each team member with continual updates, using them to compile weekly tasks and keep sales moving forward. She's in touch with all parties involved in a transaction, and also solves problems outside the office.

"Lisa shot a skunk once with a water pistol, so we could show a property," says Sonya.



Norm Pullen studies The Board.



Curtis Burchett, Lisa Seifred, Norm Pullen, Sonya Dickinson, Pick Payne

"She's the control center," says Curtis. "She attends to every detail right up to closing. She can tell us where we are on every transaction. She's good at changing focus so we can be good at what we do best."

Team members speak about their work together in terms usually reserved for committed relationships of the marital kind.

"Key ingredients are trust, respect and communication," says Rick. He shares a favorite quote: "'Share each others' strengths and fortify each others' weaknesses.'" "

"I spend more time with these folks than I do at home," says Sonya.

"This business is not for the faint of heart," Rick adds. "You have a lot of balls in the air, you're going to drop one. You hope it's not a big one. This way you've got support. It gives us a better quality of life and a better experience for the client. There is always someone available."

Curtis agrees. "Each time we add a team member, it makes us more well-rounded. We're a bargain; the client gets the knowledge and experience of four or five people for the price of one. It's a great partnership." 





Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

Executive Summary:

If you want something done right, do it yourself; here's an opportunity to design your own shoes.

Step into custom design >

One of the leading reasons people give for dressing casually these days is comfort. For women, often their biggest wardrobe problem is finding comfortable shoes that are the right style and color. Shopping for the right shoes can take lots of time and effort – and you can still fail to find the shoes you seek!

I've written previously about a unique line of shoes in which you switch out the heel height and shape to suit your needs throughout the day. A high heel can become a flat shoe in a few moments. *That* was revolutionary. But how about *designing* your own shoes?

In 2009, Australian-based company Shoes of Prey began offering an online service which lets you literally design your desired shoes!

Using their 3-D app you choose your:

- toe shape
- heel height
- shoe materials
- general shoe style – and more.

They offer sizes ranging from 2 ½ to 15, half-sizes, and narrow, average, and wide widths. Once submitted, all designs are hand-drawn and handmade, using metal shanks.

You can design a variety of styles from ballet flats to 6 inch heels, customize the toes and heels of your design, and even add decorative touches.

Available materials include leather, suede, patent leather, satin, glitter, silk, herringbone fabric and printed leather, to name a few. The site currently offers over 170 fabric and color choices. You can order up to 5 swatches of fabric for \$15 to ensure you get the look you want.

As expected, none of this comes cheap. Prices start at \$129 and go up, depending on the design complexity.

Shoes are returnable up to 365 days after purchase or can be re-made within that time period. Once ordered, they're ready in 4 weeks and shipped free to the US. Wow!

Visit www.shoesofprey.com/content/concept.html to learn more.

Partnering with Shoes of Prey, Nordstrom's offers Shoes of Prey design studios in 5 Nordstrom locations for those who want help from a stylist.

We complain that our region lacks good shopping, but for people with the resources, we can finally dream up our perfect shoe. In the time it currently takes to scout out a serviceable shoe, we can design it, order it and begin wearing the daylights out of it!

Online shopping may be threatening retail establishments, but in this case it solves a problem. I like it! 

Comments? Kathy@peacockimage.com

Based on *Exercise of a Schoolboy* >

In a previous column, we considered some of the one hundred and ten etiquette rules that George Washington, while not quite sixteen years old, transcribed from a French etiquette book. Here are more, and as in the earlier column, I've kept the original "spelling" and style and again, couldn't resist a comment or two!

1. If You Cough, Sneeze, Sigh, or Yawn, do it not Loud but Privately; and Speak not in your Yawning, but put Your handkerchief or Hand before your face and turn aside. (*Mother always said, "Cover your mouth!"*)
2. Jog not the Table or Desk on which Another reads or writes, lean not upon any one. (*Respect another's space.*)
3. Read no Letters, Books, or Papers in Company but when there is a Necessity for the doing of it you must ask leave... (*What about emails and texts?*)
4. A Man ought not to value himself of his Atchievements, or rare Qualities of wit; much less of his riches Virtue or Kindred. (*Don't brag about yourself!*)
5. If any one come to Speak to you while you are Sitting Stand up tho he be your Inferiour... (*Standing shows respect.*)
6. In writing or Speaking, give to every Person his due Title According to his Degree & the Custom of the Place. (*Precedence and honorifics are still important, whether with diplomats or business persons.*)
7. Mock not nor Jest at any thing of Importance break no Jest that are Sharp Biting and if you Deliver any thing witty and Pleasent abstain from Laughing there at yourself. (*Laughing at your own jokes!*)
8. Be not hasty to believe flying Reports to the Disparagement of any. (*Or those pesky, unwanted rants in emails, tweets, and texts.*)
9. In your Apparel be Modest and endeavour to accomodate Nature... (*Oh my, yes!*)
10. Associate yourself with Men of good Quality if you Esteem your own Reputation; for 'tis better to be alone than in bad Company. (*"If you choose bad companions, no one will believe that you are anything but bad yourself." Aesop and your mother!*)
11. Speak not of doleful Things in a Time of Mirth or at the Table; Speak not of Melancholy Things as Death and Wounds, and if others Mention them Change if you can the Discourse... (*Forgo your health and medical history.*)
12. Speak not injurious Words neither in Jest nor Earnest... (nor on Social Media.) 



Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey Harshberger

Executive Summary:
A 15-year old shows a pretty good understanding of manners; perhaps presidential candidates should take note.



Celebrating Pearisburg's local flavor >

Executive Summary:

The Town of Pearisburg's economy is revitalized through a woman's innovation and love of small town community, the flavorful concept of culinary tourism, and local collaboration.

By Christine Liana

Recipe For Success

Do you enjoy fresh, tasty regional food? Like to cook? Here's an innovative recipe: Start with a lukewarm town in southwest Virginia. Mix in visionary thinking and a business attraction strategy. Add generous amounts of creativity, and blend with the collaboration of local officials, farmers, chefs, and businesses. Gradually incorporate tourism into this economic and community development mixture. Let the inspiration rise. As it expands, sprinkle with grants. Caution: Do not use cookie-cutter models, as the uniqueness will crumble. Recipe yields an outdoor farmers' market, chef demos, food tastings, concerts, and festivals. Pair with local breweries and wineries. Serve at downtown locations.

From Drab to Fab

This is just a hint of what went into revitalizing the Town of Pearisburg. Once a thriving main street town, the advent of interstate highways decimated local businesses as mobility increased and people went elsewhere. In 1992 the Town was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2005, the Town received a grant to renovate blighted buildings. After the cosmetic transformation there had to be an





COMMUNITY FRONT



Pearisburg Community Market

incentive to attract businesses and visitors to Pearisburg. So in 2013 with a strategic planning grant from various Commonwealth funds, Giles, Pulaski, and Montgomery Counties were able to increase agri-tourism. Pearisburg's interest in developing and expanding the local and regional food market was a focus for downtown revitalization. Their Farm to Fork Program was developed with a \$99,897 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for increasing the use of locally and regionally-grown food and restoring commerce.

Enter Dianne Dinger, Town resident and owner of Flavours Media, LLC. She's a visionary who took an interest in the revitalization because of her love of small town community life. Coming from idyllic Cape Cod, Massachusetts, this former Bay State resident saw an opportunity to make a difference. In 2014, Dinger was hired by the Town as an independent contractor



Brogan and Dianne of Flavours Media LLC



to develop a tourism plan with the Town and to create, package, and market tourism initiatives with community partners. Collaboration with chefs, local producers, Chamber of Commerce, and other stakeholders identified ways Pearisburg could develop a culinary tourism program and help the revitalization.

As Destination Developer, Dinger is the primary contact for this initiative. "As more people look at small towns like Pearisburg to establish their businesses, there is more interest and a greater need to engage in tourism as a vehicle that will help a small town to move forward toward renewal," said Dinger. As she researched rural tourism and agri-tourism, Dinger discovered there was a growing interest in culinary tourism, which celebrates local farms,

Small Town, Big Personality >

Food events aren't the only reason people come here. Pearisburg's small town charm got the attention of Hollywood. In 2012, movie producers used the Town of Pearisburg and the Giles County Courthouse in the filming of *Wish You Well*, based on David Baldacci's novel. People are taking notice of Pearisburg's *Small Town, Big Personality* campaign.

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DINING OUT FOR ARTS

SEPTEMBER 18, 2015 6:15-8:30PM

1410 Wenonah Avenue, Pearisburg

Fundraising dinner
 Pearisburg Art in Public Places
 Pearisburg Community Market

Coq au Vin, buttered noodles, fresh garden salad, dinner roll, and chocolate mousse
 Cash wine bar
 \$25 per person/\$40 per couple/kids \$5

Tickets available at
 Pearisburg Town Hall
 540-921-0340 - www.pearisburg.org

Weekend events:
Thursday, Sept. 17, 4-8pm - Live music and shopping at the Community Market
Friday, Sept. 18, 5:00-8:30pm - River Sculpture Walking Tour and Unveiling of Children's Recreation Murals (Behind Community Center)
Saturday, Sept. 19, 9-4pm - Fine Arts Show on Giles County Courthouse Lawn & Shopping with Community Market Vendors in downtown Pearisburg



Activities Change Weekly

MAY - OCTOBER

1410 Wenonah Ave
 Saturdays 9:00am - 2:00pm
 Third Thursday 4:00pm - 8:00pm

PEARISBURG COMMUNITY

Market

**Fresh Food!
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 and Live Music!**

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 Tenderloin Medallions 8.99/lb
 Pork Chops 2.99/lb
 brk Fat / com 2.99/lb

GROWING LOCAL, COOKING FRESH

Visit Pearisburg Community Market on Facebook for Event Calendar or call (540) 921-0340



seasonal food, and community culture. According to Dinger, "The interest has moved away from 'cookie cutter' activities, events, and attractions. Instead, it's more about the experience. People want more of a connection to what's local: food, lifestyles, traditions, and the community."

Recent and Upcoming Events

Pearisburg Community Market: Locally grown food, cooking classes, food tastings, chef demos. Saturdays, from May - November.

Farm Table: A market booth pairing food with local brews.

Farm to Fork food and wine pairing dinners featuring Virginia wines and beers.

Fork N' Float: Tangent Outfitters, New River's Edge, and Farm to Fork offered a guided raft float trip on the New River, followed by dinner on the river in July.

Third Thursday Concerts: 5:00 - 8:30 p.m.

at the Community Market with local and regional musicians. August 18: 60's-70's Rock Band; September 15: Ratatouille Jazz Band; October 20: Dixieland Band. Dinner and wine available for purchase.

Farm to Street Dinner: September 9, 2016. Wenonah Avenue will be closed to traffic for a downtown dinner with local and regional food.

Scarecrow Festival: This October event includes a Harvest Breakfast by Farm Table, shopping, parade, pumpkin painting, a barbecue, live music, and more.

Small Town Christmas: Celebrate the old-fashioned way with a festival of trees, breakfast with Santa, holiday market, and more.

So gather your family and friends and head over to Giles County. At the intersection of U.S. Route 460 and State Route 100 you'll discover the Town of Pearisburg serving up a taste of local flavor with a big helping of community spirit. Bon Appetit! 

For more information, visit:
www.pearisburg.org or call 540-921-0340.

SUNSET RIVER RAFT TRIP & DINNER

JULY FIFTEENTH ~ 6:00-9:00PM

Tangent Outfitters, New Rivers Edge and the Pearisburg Farm to Fork Program are teaming up to offer you a guided raft trip on the scenic New River, followed by a farm to table dinner on the river!

Cost: \$90/person Includes float ride, dinner and wine.

Start off with a scenic float trip down the New River to New Rivers Edge where you will be served:

- Coconut Lime Shrimp Skewers
- Grilled Caribbean Jerk Marinated Tofu and Strawberry Skewers
- Choice of Strawberry Watermelon Sweet Tea or Fresh Lemon, Ginger, Rosemary Water

Float to Whitt Riverbend Park to eat your dinner featuring

- Pineapple Barbecue Pulled Pork Sliders
- Hawaiian Style Macaroni Salad
- Red Cabbage and Apple Coleslaw
- Watermelon, Feta, Fresh Berries, and Red Onion Salad
- Mousse Cake
- Red or White Wine, Lemonade or Berry Green Tea

Space is limited! Call 540-921-0340 to make your reservation!

Shuttle bus departs from Whitt Riverbend Park in Pearisburg at 6:15pm for the float trip

FLOAT N' FORK



MUSIC at the MARKET

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MAY-OCTOBER 4-8pm

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June 13 12-2pm: Brew, Blues and Barbecue BAND from Henry Reed Festival

June 20 9:30am-11pm, Festival in the Park See Entertainment Schedule for performances

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PEARISBURG
COMMUNITY CENTER

For a complete listing of bands Visit us on Facebook:

Pearisburg Farm to Fork and Pearisburg Community Market



The Pearisburg Community Market is open every Saturday 9:30am and third Thursday from 4pm-8pm. It is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. It was established with grant assistance by the Farm to Market Preservation Program. The Market is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established by a local Environmental Challenge Grant awarded by the Virginia Commission for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and matching funds contributed by the Town of Pearisburg.



Pearisburg Movie Set



Reaching the tech-savvy >

Mainstream marketing is quickly becoming the way of the past. As today's tech-savvy client and customer looks for more niche marketing, targeted directly to him or her, a company's unwillingness to expand their marketing platform could be incredibly detrimental. This is especially true when marketing to millennials and professionals. Successful companies seem to find ways to add value to their marketing, making it active and memorable rather than passive and forgettable.

For local businesses, this can be a challenge because of high-cost barriers of entries. One local business is working hard to change this perception. Cortex Leadership Consulting has been a sponsor of and member at the CoLab, Roanoke's hub for small business and innovation, for over a year. To expand their marketing reach, Cortex has recently partnered with local news outlet WFXR "Virginia First" to create "Virginia@Work," a Sunday night broadcast that helps viewers start their work week off right.

In addition to the weekly segment, Cortex has invited Virginia First into the CoLab to record a weekly podcast out of Oration Studio, CoLab's in-house audio engineering suite. As a member, Cortex is able to use the suite free of charge. As noted in a previous Valley Business FRONT column, podcasts have a listening audience of over 46 million Americans. They are meant to be incredibly specific, targeting a demographic who not only has interest in the topic, but who might also be motivated to purchase or subscribe based on the perceived value of the products offered.

Additionally, Cortex spent some time in the recording studio finalizing their first e-book. In the past year, Lynda McNutt Foster published the book titled *Time Mastery: 7 Simple Steps to Richer Outcomes* while working out of the CoLab. She recorded the audiobook, available through audible.com, out of the same recording studio that she now uses for the weekly podcasts.

"Our collaboration with the CoLab, their staff, and smart, creative, members has been a true game changer in the successful launch of Cortex Leadership Consulting. The resources we receive far outweigh the membership fees we pay. It's a true oasis for a small business enterprise," says Foster, CEO of Cortex Leadership Consulting.

As CoLab director, it's encouraging to see Cortex and others use the amenities offered. Their dedication to broadening their listening audience through multimedia marketing is exemplary, and paves the way for other local businesses. 

Young Professionals

By Ariel Lev

Executive Summary:

A local training consultant and media outlet pair up to produce informational segments for the small business community.

Email alert >

The amount of time spent handling email in the office is overwhelming. According to a recent McKinsey Global Institute study, the average office worker spends 2.6 hours per day reading and sending email. A staggering 28% of the workday! What a huge opportunity to reduce wasted time and improve productivity. So why don't more people do something about it?

I think the biggest challenge is that most of us simply don't want to reduce our email time.

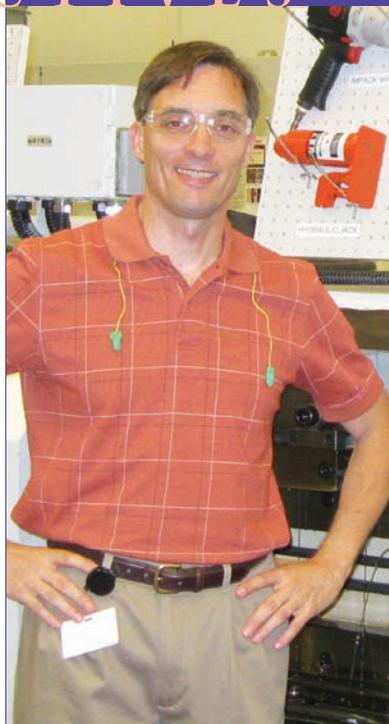
While you may not enjoy email, it certainly offers a safe, simple, and easy way to communicate. You can say anything you want in an email, control your message, and avoid confrontation.

And let's be honest. Don't you enjoy telling other people how many emails you get each day? Many of us like to one-up each other about how busy we are, telling humble-brags about our email volume like a badge of honor. *"I get over 200 emails a day. If I don't regularly check my email, I can't keep up!"*

Reading and sending email provides no value to your organization. Don't believe me? Consider this. What does your organization pay you to do? Or better yet, take a look at your job description. Does it say anything about handling email? Email is simply one of many methods to communicate, and since effective communication requires much more than words, it's not even a good method.

If you've been in the workforce as long as I have (ahem, let's say over 25 years), you can remember a time when email was not yet available. Although there are some clear productivity advantages when using email in some situations, the total use (and abuse) of email has probably done more harm than good.

If you're now convinced of the benefits of spending less time on email, and you want to take action, there are some effective methods that I'll tell you about. But you'll have to wait until next month because I've run out of time. I have to get back to my email. 📧



Business Operations

By Mike Leigh

Executive Summary:
Have you checked your email lately? Of course you have; therein lies a potential problem.



INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
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 BUSINESS COUNSELING
 ●
 BUSINESS LITIGATION
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CREATIVE COUNSEL FOR CREATIVE CLIENTS



Forest Wagner, F.A. Wagner Insurance

Insurance Agents in the dot com age >

Executive Summary:

Insurance agents need to be technology-relevant to stay competitive; including engagement on social media.

By Christine Liana

Changing Times, Changing Needs

In January 1991, I began my insurance career. This was before the Internet was a household resource and everyone had cell phones. We're talking "old school" here: we independent agents met with clients and prospects in the office or their places of business, talked by phone, and manually rated policies. That means you took a calculator and a four-pound manual and looked up criteria to find the rate to calculate the premium. Software rating and e-mail quickly followed, making our time more productive.

The "social-media" concept was simple back then: networking socially at Chamber of Commerce events, talking face-to-face, and exchanging business cards. If your agency accomplished something noteworthy in the community, the local media covered it.

Keeping up with industry changes is crucial. So is keeping up with technology changes, especially for agents who can identify with this nostalgia. A fresh, interactive website is a necessity. Anything that looks cluttered, boring, or homemade shows a reluctance to keep up with the times, and can repel a new generation of clients.

Marketing Magic

Independent agents represent many companies and have access to competitive solutions for their clients. They also need

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competitive solutions for staying connected with clients in the .com age.

Forest Wagner, of F.A. Wagner Insurance in Daleville, Botetourt County, is an agent who innovatively uses the Internet and social media to grow his business. Over the 10 years he's been an agent, Wagner's Internet presence has evolved from one that rarely got much traffic or views to a popular site that got over 200 views in May. Clients have more communication options in addition to calling and visiting the office. They can submit information for policy changes and request certificates of insurance from the website. Having an identity on Facebook helps exponentially. Clients like the agency's Facebook page and use it often. "Social media isn't going away, so if you own a small business, why wouldn't you want the exposure and have a presence on it?" says Wagner.



Making the Connection

With competing demands for your time, you may feel overwhelmed by the e-marketing concept. But it's simply an electronic way of providing information and staying in touch with people. Concerned that you don't have the time, patience, and content writing or tech skills? Assign social media management to a staffer who does. Start with Facebook. Here are some tips to get you started or boost your existing plan:

- Post helpful facts or comments educating clients on insurance coverages.

- Talk at their level, in your own voice - no fancy industry jargon.
- Is your agency involved with the community? Let photos tell the story, and include captions.
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- What impression do you get waiting in an office and seeing a 10-year old magazine left out for visitors? (Yes, seriously.) That's why you need to keep your social media content fresh and relevant.



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- Be sure to clearly include your social media links (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) on your website.
- Also include them on your business cards and e-mail signatures.
- Don't make it a numbers game or a popularity contest. Does a LinkedIn connection with 1,000 connections actually take the time to communicate with all of them? Besides the six degrees of separation concept, it's about the quality of connections, not quantity.

The Human Connection

Customers are increasingly self-sufficient as they price-shop from their cell phones and computers. But when it comes to making informed decisions about their

insurance, it goes beyond price. They need to be connected with the expertise of their insurance agent; not an order-taker at the other end of a toll-free number or a website blog.

Professional agents realize the value of having an engaging website and a strong social media presence as tools for name recognition, lead generation, sales, and client retention. Regardless of the times, they also know that it's no substitute for hearing, explaining, and advising what their clients need through actual human conversation. So maybe the more things change, the more they do stay the same 

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Courtesy of Pulaski County YEA!

Members of Pulaski County YEA! include students from Pulaski Middle School, Pulaski County High School, Dublin Middle School, and home schooled.

An entrepreneurial catalyst >

Executive Summary:

Pulaski County YEA! gets young people thinking about business early in the game by including active engagement.

By Christiana Marjakangas

Imagine you are 11 again. What would you be doing? Riding your bikes with the neighborhood kids in the summer or enjoying holiday movies with family in the winter? Pulaski County youth, ages 11 – 17, spent the past year's winter and spring months connecting passion with a coherent plan of action and registering legal businesses in their communities.

The Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) is a national program offered by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and hosted locally by the Pulaski County Chamber of Commerce. The six-month course offers middle and high school students the tools necessary to launch fully functioning legal enterprises. Students attend a weekly class after school for three hours in which they meet with successful local business men and women, connect with a mentor from the local community, and listen to field experts and entrepreneurs share their knowledge.

Nathan Shelburne, a homeschooled rising junior, launched Concrete Avant-Garde, a company that has "reimagined concrete and its use in the home." CAG specializes in goods such as "trendy drink coasters, style savvy cheese boards, and everyday items made unique." The 17-year-old CEO, who represented Pulaski County in the Saunders Scholar National Semi-Finals Competition in Rochester, NY says, "Speaking in front of so many high caliber people has helped me to refine my public speaking skills and feel more comfortable talking to a room full of people."

YEA! not only guides creative, motivated

students through the business process, but it bridges the gap between our business communities and enterprising youth. Throughout its inaugural year, Pulaski County YEA! partnered with area businesses and education authorities like Member One Federal Credit Union, Infinity Eye Care, Pulaski County IDA, Pulaski Public Schools, and New River Community College. The program also sought out individual members of the business community to work with students to provide individual guidance throughout the consumer marketing and business/financial plan stages of the course.

Pulaski County Chamber of Commerce executive director, Peggy White, says she brought the Academy to Pulaski County because, "it gave our students another chance to compete on a national level and the opportunity to utilize creative thinking and obtain life skills such as professional protocol and confidence." YEA! students have a chance to network and get advice from excellent leaders in the community throughout the course, but more exclusively during the CEO Roundtable event which last year included the plant managers of Volvo Trucks and BondeCote Corp., as well as the CEO of LewisGale Hospital Pulaski, long time entrepreneur and local official. After a recent visit to Pulaski County, Senator Mark Warner also shared his entrepreneurial spirit when he sent YEA! graduates letters congratulating them on the launch of their first businesses.

Pulaski County YEA! program manager, Christiana Marjakangas, is looking for interested partners from the business community to lend their expertise during the 2016-17 class. Participants share their knowledge on a variety of topics including marketing, branding, accounting or non-profit work. A business leader or teacher may nominate students, or they may apply for the program directly at www.pulaskichamber.info/YEA. For more information, contact the Pulaski Chamber at 540-674-1991 or communication@pulaskichamber.info. 



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Shark Patrol

By Keith Finch

Executive Summary:
If your church, charity or social club is thinking of holding a fundraiser involving games of chance, then be sure to play according to Hoyle.

Game theory >

I am a Rational and Scientific Man and so fully aware that the minuscule chances of winning the Virginia Lottery make it a supreme rip-off. But when the Powerball jackpot gets above \$1 billion, even I can't help buying a few tickets in secret. So I was mortified when my friend Ned from church saw me filling out a playslip at the lottery counter at the Quick Stop.

"Powerball?" Ned chuckled. "If you like games of chance, then you should just come by the church this week! Check out these flyers that I just had printed."

Ned had a stack of flyers under his arm. He held one out:

FIRST ANNUAL CHURCH BINGO WEEK!

Come play 90-Ball Bingo! Proceeds support our Labor Day ice cream social!
Mon-Tue-Fri at 6 p.m.
Credit / Debit Cards Accepted!

* * *

CAR RAFFLE

We also are raffling off a new 2016 Chevy Malibu! Proceeds go to little Ritchie Notter's leukemia treatments. Tickets \$50

"Thanks," I said. "Somehow I didn't hear about this."

"It's a new thing, just approved by the Fundraising Committee," he said, grinning. "Actually it was sort of my idea."

"Well, Virginia law does allow a not-for-profit charity to hold raffles and bingo games without a permit, if it grosses less than \$40,000 per year from them," I said. "But there are still a lot of rules you have to follow. For starters, you can't do go-ball bingo."

"Really? We used to play 90-ball bingo all the time at our church in Texas," he said.

"That may be, but Virginia law defines 'bingo' as 75-ball bingo, so go-ball charitable bingo is not allowed," I said. "Have you bought the bingo cards already?"

"Yes, we ordered them through Amazon," he said.

"Hmm. Well, I hope we can return them, because Virginia law requires that all bingo materials be purchased through registered suppliers," I said. "Amazon isn't on that list. Now, I see here that the proceeds are going to be used for the church ice cream social. Unfortunately that's not allowed either."

"But it's a regular event that the church has been doing for years," he said.

"I know, but the Virginia Code requires that the proceeds of

PERSPECTIVES

gaming be used only for 'religious, charitable, community or educational purposes,' and it specifically prohibits using them for 'social or recreational activities,'" I said. "So you can't use gaming proceeds to fund the ice cream social. I also see that you're planning to have bingo on Monday, Tuesday and Friday. We're going to have to cancel one of those days."

"Why?" he said.

"Because the Virginia Code states that a charitable organization can't hold bingo games on more than two days in a calendar week," I said. "At least not without a special permit. Now, it says here in the flyer that we'll be accepting credit cards and debit cards."

"Yes, we got one of those card readers for my iPhone," he said.

"Debit cards are OK, but we can't take credit cards," I said. "The Virginia Code allows payment by cash, checks and debit cards, but not credit. I suppose the idea was that people shouldn't be allowed to borrow money and then gamble with it."

"I get it!" he said. "That explains why you can't buy a Virginia Lottery ticket with a credit card."

"Right, I'll bet that's the same reasoning," I said. "OK one more thing: I see that all the money earned in this raffle is going to the Notter boy's cancer treatment. It's terrible what's happened to him."

"Yes, it's been a shock to everyone," he said.

"Unfortunately, raffle proceeds can't be used that way," I said. "They have to be used for 'religious, charitable, community or educational purposes.'"

"Isn't helping a sick boy a charitable purpose?" he said?

"Not legally, no," I said. "A charitable purpose is one that benefits either the entire public or else a large and indefinite

““”

Virginia law defines 'bingo' as 75-ball bingo, so 90-ball charitable bingo is not allowed.

““”

Virginia law allows a not-for-profit charity to hold raffles and bingo games without a permit, if it grosses less than \$40,000 per year from them. But there are still a lot of rules you have to follow.

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The Virginia Code requires that the proceeds of gaming be used only for ‘religious, charitable, community or educational purposes,’ and it specifically prohibits using them for ‘social or recreational activities.’ So you can’t use gaming proceeds to fund the ice cream social.

‘charitable class’ of people. If it’s possible to identify the specific people who will benefit, then it’s considered a ‘private benefit’ and it’s not a charitable purpose any more. So for example it’s fine to raise money to benefit cancer patients in general, but if you raise money for a particular person, then it’s not.”

“You know, once I donated money to help a friend who was severely burned, and they said that it wasn’t tax-deductible,” he said. “Was that the reason?”

“Yes, it’s the same sort of thing,” I said.

In the end we got the bingo rescheduled and reorganized, and the church cancelled the raffle and had a different fundraiser for the Notter boy instead.

I still haven’t won at Powerball, though. (Not for want of trying.) 

Note: facts have been changed to preserve confidentiality. Oh, and this isn’t legal advice—you should consult a lawyer when planning a charitable gaming program, applying for a charitable gaming license, etc.





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Not a mistake; this is the scene at Dinner in the Dark

A glimpse of the experience >

Executive Summary:

A dinner organized by Roanoke's Vice-Mayor David Trinkle on behalf of New Vision, delivers a compelling message.

By Tom Field

The chatter and smiles and brightness and easy going drink passing social scene at the brief reception was about to change. You catch a smile here. Recognize a face over there. Shake a hand as you step through the crowd. Feel a familiar back slap as a business associate gently bumps into you up at the bar.

In less than a minute, it's all about to change.

I'm instructed to touch the elbow of the person in front of me as we shuffle in single file down the narrow stairscape. There is laughter and jokes; though not quite at the volume they were just seconds ago. Before we know it, we're standing at an entrance to what essentially resembles a doorway to a cave.

We are ushered into the darkness.

What would normally take seven seconds takes us much longer... just to be seated at our table. I've already lost a bit of the true sense of time. We are given some basic instructions; and we immediately begin fending for ourselves. For me, it was patting my wife's leg beside me in reassuring fashion, followed by talking, to let the both of us know this was going to work out alright.

We're at a dinner. In the dark. A legacy event whereby outgoing vice-mayors of Roanoke choose some activity to usher in the changeover. In this instance, Vice-Mayor Dave Trinkle selected "Dinner in the Dark", a benefit for New Vision, formerly Voice of the Blue Ridge, a non profit service for vision impaired individuals, offering audio access to newspapers and magazines, adaptive technologies such as text to voice and digital device screen magnification [www.newvisionroa.org].

What a most appropriate event. Pitch blackness. Now, back to our table.

I feel.

I feel for my napkin (the single most important item). I feel for my utensils. I feel for the glassware; one cold one with water, one empty wine glass. We are told there is a white and a red wine—help yourself. I imagine all of us—I think I can count six voices in the correct proximity—clambering for the bottles. Sure enough a bottle is passed. It's not cold, must be red. I feel for my glass with my left hand, sticking one of my fingers inside the lip, carefully tilt the bottle into it, until I decipher the wetness touching. Great. First set of activities accomplished: I have my napkin tucked in my collar, and a full glass of wine.

The remainder of the evening required many more feats of deciphering. I learned at the get go not to bother with cutting up anything. I feel and tear things apart to lift them to my mouth. I can only imagine what the wait staff see, as they are equipped with night vision gear.

The bread was delicious, which was good, since I never did locate the butter (nor would I have bothered trying to match the two up). The salad was worrisome with its wet dressing and my light shirt, but it was too good not to devour, particularly the handy coconut encrusted goat cheese balls, which could easily be popped into the mouth. The main course was an outright exploration. My wife asked the wait staff to define the locations of entre and sides by using the clock face analogy, but our server simply said everything looked white under night vision. (I also took that to mean they didn't have to bother with any particular placement.)

The first thing I touch is rather dense. Chicken. I just pick the whole thing up and gnaw on it, recalling the accuracy of that "finger lickin' good" advertising tag line. The remainder of the meal was excellent, and deciphering the tastes and textures



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and herbs and spices added to my journey around an unseen plate. The dessert was pure ecstasy.

My date informed me she was raising her hand, which was the code to have an escort take you to the restroom. The both of us wondered if she would ever return. She did, though her escort did ask her to tell where she was seated. How would she know? All she knew was we might have veered toward the right, and we certainly passed a lot of tables.

Eventually, our organizers flipped on the lights. More than one person wore clothes that were different than when they arrived; their tops saturated with colors and stains and patterns a bit unexpected. Our table guests all had unfamiliar faces. And even before the vice-mayor invited a few folks up to speak, the point of this whole experience had been made.



Roanoke City's outgoing vice-mayor Dave Trinkle, flanked by wait staff about to strap on night vision goggles, explains what is about to happen as diners will be led down to the "dungeon" of Hotel Roanoke.

We only got a glimpse of what people with vision impairments don't see every day.

Well played, Mr. Trinkle.
Thank you, New Vision. 

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When TMI really isn't TMI >

As a professional marketer and an unofficial professional craft beer connoisseur, I am compelled to share this observation. The current edition of Craft Beer & Brewing magazine contains an infographic designed from statistical rankings of beer barrel production as reported from the Brewers Association.

It is a work of art.

Or, it's just terrible.

Depending on who's looking at it.

An infographic, in case you really don't know, is supposed to be a graphical arrangement of data to make the presentation easier to absorb. For most of my pals in marketing and advertising and communications and media, we would collectively agree this chart is an abysmal failure. Good grief! Just look at it!

Frankly, this perspective is an accurate one. For one, the graphics used don't exactly correspond to the industry represented. Oftentimes, infographics employ symbologies and metaphors that match or make sense with the data. In this case, the designer could have used

continued on Page 43

On Tap from the Pub

By Tom Field

Executive Summary:
When you're a fan, "too much information" is never a problem.



Too much to show large enough to read, but you get a sense of the infographic here

Exiting comments >

It's like turkeys voting for Thanksgiving. (Or in Britain, Christmas.)

Hands up those who saw it coming. Surely the Brits wouldn't Brexit. They couldn't, could they? Well, the jingoists won out, and it's cheerio to Europe.

Worldwide economic Armageddon was immediately predicted. And who could argue against that? Even before the opening bell was rung the morning after the referendum, world markets plummeted. The pound instantly became the modern-day equivalent of the Soviet-era ruble. A government (and opposition party) fell into complete disarray. According to the doomsayers, it was the end of civilization as we know it.

Please allow me to express my two cents—or should that be two pence? I'm an expat Brit, who still has some, albeit pathetically meager, investments in the old country. I watched the events leading up to the vote with perhaps more interest than the average American, but with rather less passion than my home countrymen. I was convinced that the Brits—traditionally nothing less than rational—would vote Remain. It made perfect sense. The United Kingdom is no longer a superpower; we no longer rule 25 percent of the world's population. While we remain an influential player, the sun set many decades ago on the British Empire.

Like it or not, Britain is reliant on a united Europe—a Europe, I contend, to which it rightly belongs. Having lived stateside for many years, I see parallels between modern Europe and the United States, at least in a kind of familial sense. Europe has Finland and Greece; the U.S. has Maine and New Mexico. Poles apart, disparate traditions, different customs, but mutually reliant. How could Britain possibly survive, isolated from its European neighbors? Come to that, how could the rest of the world ever recover economic stability?

Well, a few weeks have passed since that historic and momentous referendum. Life goes on—at least this side of the pond—and financially, some might say, for the better. At the time of writing, the Dow has hit an all-time high, and mortgage rates are heading for an all-time low.

It's that whole cause-and-effect thing. And in this instance, the effect is pretty darned good. Our 401(k)s are doing rather nicely, thank you very much; mortgage originators are dealing with swarms of eager refinancers; and if your travel plans include a visit to the land of steak and kidney pie, your dollar (despite some rallying of the pound) will likely buy you seconds.

Of course, markets, being such sensitive creatures, are prone to all kinds of influences, and who knows if the seismic shock

continued on Page 43



Guest Commentary

By Nick Hart

Executive Summary:
A financial / marketing executive shares his UK to USA perspective.

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“ ”
We can finally dream up
our perfect shoe — Page 17

“ ”
Mix in visionary thinking and a
business attraction strategy — Page 17

Field / On Tap

from Page 40

obvious representations like beer mugs or hops, or he could have been clever with rising and falling bubbles of froth. Instead, we just get colored lines. And another arrangement would have easier to read.

But for the aficionado and certain stakeholders of the craft beer industry, the chart is rather delightful... heady—in a good way, you could say. First, it certainly makes the point that with the exception of the very top five largest brewers (some would argue they should have surpassed the "craft" designation), the movement from everyone else is volatile and, well... up for grabs—like the winner of a beer pong tournament at the frat house. It's the very picture of survival of the fittest.

I first looked for Deschutes and Ballast Point; our two new arriving brewers coming to our region in the next two years. Prost! Zum wohl, they're included (they better have been!). But then, you have to admit, if you're interested in this business, you can't help but want to trace your fat little tab-popping / cap-unscrewing finger along the meandering timelines to see what goes where and when it goes up or down. The exercise might be more fun accompanied by a favorite stout or IPA; and maybe that's part of the expectation.

I had to share my observation, because I have good buddies who love marketing and who love beer. If you're truly invested in the information, even a most complicated chart can be accepted, adored, and effective.

In any case, this designer could cover the upcoming presidential election. 

Guest Commentary

from Page 41

of Brexit will be followed by economic aftershocks. For right now, though, some degree of financial normality has returned, both here and in Britain.

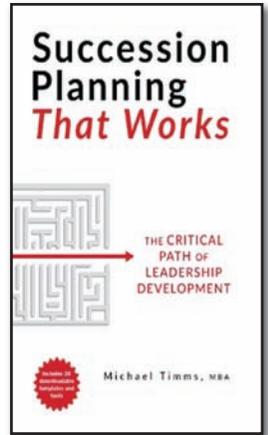
I remain saddened by the UK's decision to sever alliances with Europe, and the potential effects of Brexit on my homeland certainly concern me. But has it, as once feared, devastated the economy of the good ole USofA? Au contraire, as they say in one of Britain's (former) partners. 

“““

for the aficionado and certain stakeholders of the craft beer industry, the chart is rather delightful... heady—in a good way, you could say.

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



Real world pass-along advice

Michael Timms says, "recruiting is broken!" It is costly and outdated. He is a succession planning expert who has recently published a new book that cautions companies about the dangers of some business "best" practices. His new guidebook, *Succession Planning That Works* (FriesenPress; 2016) lays out the importance of succession planning and presents an easy-to-follow road map for implementing one—for companies of all sizes.

In fact, after interviewing over 50 executives about how their organizations implement succession planning, Timms learned that the over-complication of succession planning has effectively rendered it useless in many organizations. Timms argues that effective succession planning boils down to three principles: executive leadership and buy-in, keeping it simple, and following what he calls the "critical path of leadership development." He looks at how the traditional recruiting model is outdated, misused, and costing companies far more than they know. The book also examines how HR leaders can more effectively "sell" succession planning to their executive team.

—Kristi Hughes

Formula works

Masterfully written. *A Doubter's Almanac* by Ethan Canin (Random House; 2016) is a rather brilliant composition. Writers in today's market are constantly told to value brevity and say what you need to say in as few words as possible. (Also, don't be repetitive, which is exactly what I did in the previous sentence). In other words, no one should appreciate Herman Melville in popular literature, because we simply don't need to know the details of the whaling industry to

capture the essence of Moby Dick. I think that rule is absolutely made to be broken, but only by the true word masters. In this novel, Canin can keep on writing; because he catches me reading every single word—and much of it is about a subject I generally detest (particularly all throughout my youthful student years): mathematics. Indeed, the story confirmed my personal objections to embracing this most perfect field of study, with its absolutes and right or wrong and no wiggle room to create your own results. But one is completely drawn in to the father-son relationship here in as deep a theoretical expression possible. There's an absolute for you.

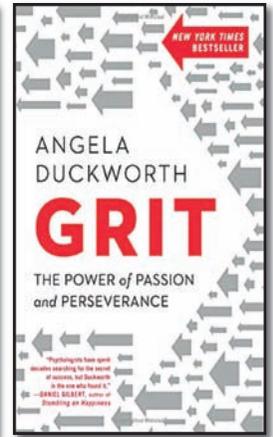
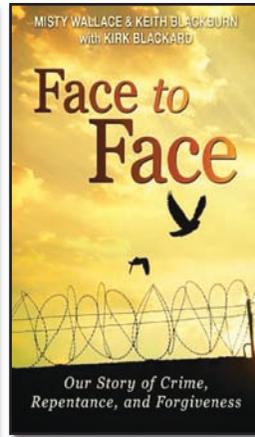
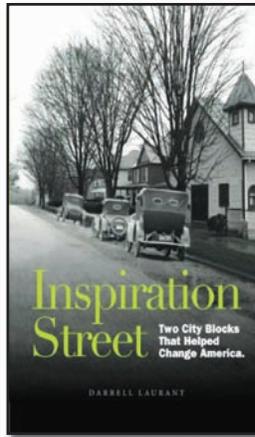
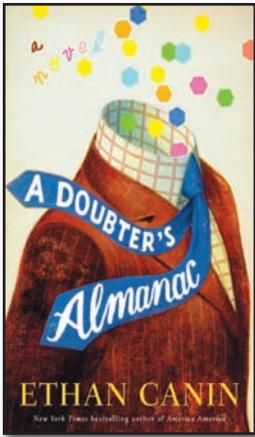
—Tom Field

History in Lynchburg

There are plenty of famous streets in America, made notable by a wide variety of circumstances. Pierce Street in Lynchburg, named for an ignoble 19th Century president, is not one of them. It should be.

Former Journalist Darrell Laurant (Lynchburg News & Advance metro columnist for 25 years) has focused his fourth book, *Inspiration Street: Two City Blocks That Helped Change America* (Blackwell Press), on a locally historic portion of Pierce Street, one where African luminaries of the most recently completed century lived, visited, learned and taught. It is the street where Anne Spencer, the notable Lynchburg poet, lived and entertained. It is a street paved with athletic luminaries, educators, military innovators, and even the outrageous and tragic story of a Congo pygmy.

Pierce Street is the center of innovation, two blocks that made a huge difference in the



perception of and state of black America. It has most recently been recognized with more historic plaques than any other street in Virginia, but it remains a quiet, placid section in the center of Old Lynchburg, housing older residents.

Laurent's book does not dwell in sentiment. He is long enough in the tooth and veteran enough in his profession to avoid that, sticking with the story, letting the good ones tell themselves. And this is a good one, an important one, one you should read.

—Dan Smith

Forgive and...remember

Face to Face (CreateSpace; 2016) by Misty Wallace and Keith Blackburn is the true account of the night Keith shot Misty and left her for dead. Can a victim of violence and the perpetrator find forgiveness? A powerful story of redemption and forgiveness. This is the true account of Misty Wallace and the night Keith Blackburn shot her and left her for dead. Misty and Keith take turns giving their accounts of the events leading up to that night and what happened after, and how they were affected by the chain of circumstances. Their story will make you pause, laugh, cry, and wonder about the power of forgiveness and how it changes lives.

Can a victim of violence and the perpetrator find forgiveness? *Face to Face* examines Misty's experiences as the victim of a violent attack and what the perpetrator goes through, from being arrested, to spending time in jail, to getting released, and learning how to live again, to sharing their stories for others to see how forgiveness doesn't just affect the one forgiving, but also the one who has been forgiven.

This quote from the book captures the tone of the book: "I tried to put the bullet back in the gun. When Misty forgave me I realized I couldn't fix the past. I had to work toward changing the future. When we change our minds and thinking, we change our future." *Face to Face*— what happens when Misty and Keith come face to face with the night that changed their lives.

—Sally Shupe

Quit, never

There's one commonality that I've noticed between successful entrepreneurs and employees alike... grit. *Grit*, the book, by Angela Duckworth (Scribner; 2016) is about tenacity: also defined as perseverance, determination, stamina, endurance, purposefulness, tirelessness, and staying power. When things get tough, do you quit or do you find a way to come out on top? There's always a way to problem solve your way to a winning solution for everyone involved. Not everyone will identify with this mentality, but the people who appreciate *Grit* will not just like but LOVE this book. I certainly did!

—Samantha Steidle

(The reviewers: Kristi Hughes is a publicist in Cherry Hill, NJ; Tom Field is a creative director and publisher of FRONT; Dan Smith is a Roanoke-based author of seven books, freelance writer, blogger and the founding editor of FRONT; Sally Shupe lives in Newport, works at Virginia Tech, and is a freelance editor; Samantha Steidle is the cofounder of the CoLab in Roanoke, owner of Virtual Marketing, and teaches entrepreneurship at Virginia Western Community College.)



Thanks from UW >

United Way of Montgomery, Radford and Floyd recognized local businesses, individual donors, and volunteers who supported the organization over the 2015-16 year at an appreciation lunch provided by Campus Automotive and Maaco and attended by 100, on June 28 at Blacksburg Country Club.



Art spelled out >

Art at the Market was held July 16 at the Farmer's Market in Blacksburg; Tracie Jones, one of the judges, works on the letter "V" for the Virginia Tourism LOVEworks program in advance of the event.

FRONT 'N ABOUT



Courtesy of Certiport

Word! >

Anthony Malabad, an 18-year-old who just graduated from Turner Ashby High School in Rockingham County, was named the best in the United States at Microsoft Word; over 300,000 students entered the competition, and Anthony was invited to Certiport's Microsoft Office Specialist U.S. National Championship event in Orlando, Florida, where he competed with 108 finalists to be named Champion.



Business growth >

Nurseries, greenhouses, and garden supply businesses in our region report brisk business, even this late in the planting season, along with the extra wet weather; such as **Riverside Nursery** in Salem.



New deal >

Brambleton Imports in Roanoke County rolled out its newly renovated building in early July.



CWB @ DTC >

Craig Wayne Boyd, country musician and winner of *The Voice* 2014 television show competition, performed at **Daleville Town Center** in Botetourt County on July 16 as part of the **Sidewinders Summer Concert Series**.

FRONT 'N ABOUT



Ready, set, open >

Doctor Tom Fame, Allergist has opened up his new practice in Salem, celebrating with a ribbon cutting at the new office—renovated from a former barbeque joint—on July 8.



Jelly in the square >

Jellyfish (in their own tank) as well as the living reef aquarium greet visitors of Roanoke's **Center in the Square** as they explore the downtown market area throughout the summer.



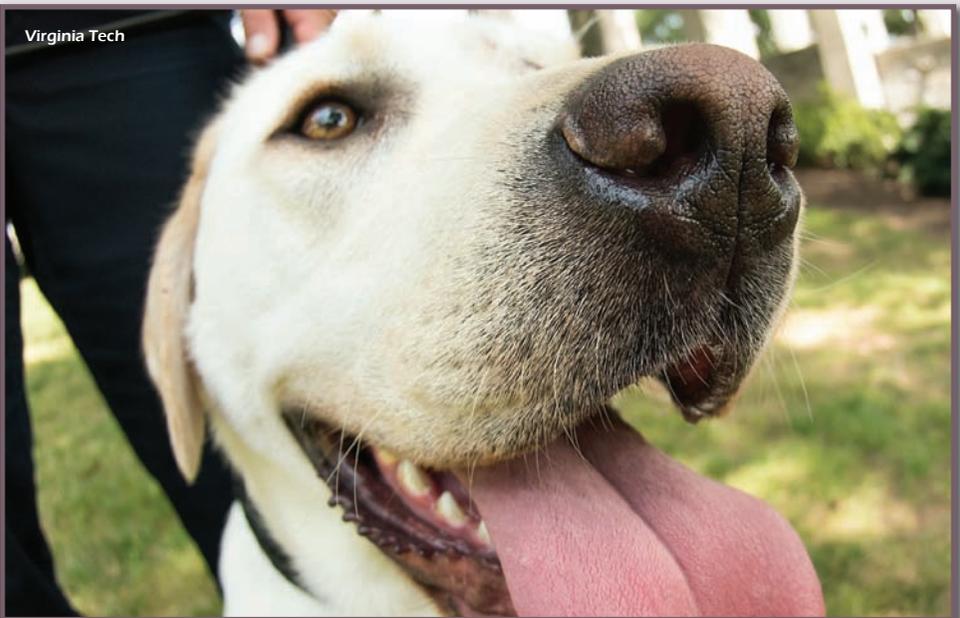
Rumour has it >

Rumours, a Fleetwood Mac tribute band entertains at the **Dr Pepper Park at the Bridges** in Roanoke on July 14; one show among a busy lineup for the summer season.



Jammin' man >

The Town of Buchanan held its **Reggae by the River** 2016 on Saturday, July 23, to a happy crowd moving to the bands Shorefire and Lazy Man Dub Band (above).



Who's a happy dog >

Virginia Tech Police Department adds two new canine officers to its force who also bring bomb sniffing capabilities; including Toro (above), a 1-year old yellow Labrador.

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

Career FRONT

FINANCIAL FRONT

Phyllis Karavatakis has been promoted to president of Carter Bank & Trust.



Barnes

Stewart Barnes with Ameriprise Financial in Roanoke received the Accredited Portfolio Management Advisor designation from the College of Financial Planning.



Ely

Matthew Ely with The Myrias Group practice of Ameriprise Financial Services in Roanoke has obtained the Certified Financial Planner certification.

William Hayter has been named chairman-elect of the Virginia Bankers Association.

Patience O'Brien has been appointed vice president of corporate projects for MemberOne Federal Credit Union.

Vance Adkins has been promoted to chief



Adkins

financial officer at HomeTown Bankshares.

LEGAL FRONT

Roanoke Bar Association has elected 2016-17: **Hugh Wellons**, president; **Kevin Holt**, president-elect; **Lee Osborne**, secretary/treasurer; **Joseph Mott**, past president; **Lori Jones Bentley**, **Daniel Frankl**, **Patrick Kenney**, **James O'Keefe**, **Justin Summs**, **Christen Church**, **Macel Janoschka**, and **Nancy Reynolds**, directors.

WELLNESS FRONT

Amanda Cross, **Jayson Divers**, **Carmen Dillon** and **Vincent Scaia** have joined Professional Therapies.



Agee

Nancy Howell Agee has been named chair-elect designate by the American Hospital Association.

TECH/INDUSTRY FRONT



Varano

Nathaniel Varano has been promoted to chief operations officer at Aeroprobe Corporation.



White

Lisa White has been promoted to vice president of outside plant for Virginia region at Cox Communications.

DEVELOPMENT FRONT

Shawn Callahan has been named first vice president; **Cat White** has been named Region I vice president; and **Merle Heckman** has been named Region II vice president of the Home Builders Association of Virginia for 2017.

Conrad Campbell and **Rory Willis** have joined as sales associates at the Roanoke office of Long & Foster.

RETAIL/SERVICE FRONT



Hoskins

Janet Hoskins has been named catering sales manager at The Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center.



Accomando



Whittaker



Lightner

Daniel Accomando has been appointed as

director of restaurants; **Lindsay Whittaker** has been appointed beverage manager; and **Jessica Lightner** has been appointed restaurant manager at The Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center.

Steve Watkins has joined as food production manager at the Kroontje Health Care Center at Warm Hearth Village.

EDUCATION FRONT

Stephen Carroll has joined as community services director at Blue Ridge Autism and Achievement Center.



Rajagopalan

Padma Rajagopalan has been awarded the Robert E. Hord Jr. Professorship in Chemical Engineering by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.

Mark Blanks has been named director of Virginia Tech Mid-Atlantic Aviation Partnership.

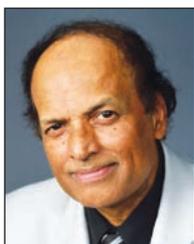
Erik Westman has been named head of the Department of Mining and Minerals Engineering at the College of Engineering at Virginia Tech.

Sean Carlson has been named coach of Roanoke College's men's and women's cross country and track and field teams.



Long

Letitia Long has joined the advisory board of Virginia Tech's Hume Center for National Security and Technology.



Ahmed

S. Ansar Ahmed has been named dean for research and graduate studies at Virginia Tech's veterinary college.

Marcy Schnitzer has been named assistant provost for diversity and strategic planning at Virginia Tech.

Have a career announcement?

Send announcements to news@vbFRONT.com. Photos should be color, 300dpi. A contact / source must be provided. Inclusions are not guaranteed and all submissions are subject to editing.

CULTURE FRONT

Blue Ridge Literacy Board of Directors elected officers for 2016-17: **Kevin Devine**, president; **Carole Tarrant**, **Greg Feldmann**, and **Michael Hertz**, vice presidents; **Connie Vaughn**, treasurer; **Jean Holzinger**, secretary; and board members: **Trish Burch**, **Margie Cundiff**, **Jennifer Dean**, **Gina French**, **Ellie Hammer**, **George Kegley**, **Sandra Pratt**, **Dave Prosser**, **Pam Reilly**, **Steve Turner**, **Ken Tuck**, and **Sheila Umberger**.

Nancy Ruth Patterson received the Helen C. Hanes Friend of

Education Award at the Margaret Sue Copenhaver Institution for Teaching and Learning.

MUNICIPAL FRONTS

Jessica Fintel has joined as economic development specialist at Roanoke County Department of Economic Development.

Earl Reynolds has been appointed deputy city manager of the City of Danville.

Tim Jones has been named chief of police for Roanoke City.

Compiled by Tom Field

“It’s about the quality of connection, not the quantity”

— Page 29



Virginia Tech

VTCRI's Read Montague

Mind opening

Computational Psychiatry, a new journal covering cognitive psychiatry to be launched by MIT Press, will involve significant contribution from researchers at **Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute**, including Read Montague, director of the Computational Psychiatry Unit as co-editor and Justin King, assistant director of information technology and data management as managing editor.

Luxury plus rugged

Virginia's Blue Ridge tourism bureau and **The Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center** have announced a new Roanoke Mountain Adventures package

where guests can combine their hotel stay with a mountain-road-or-greenway biking, paddle board-kayaking-or-tubing, hiking or other outdoor adventure, accompanied by sundries, shuttle services and equipment rentals, and a local guide for a special low package price. [hotelroanoke.com / roanokemountainadventures.com]

Dog collared

Diesel is the official name of the new Roanoke Rail Yard Dawgs hockey team mascot, the result of a public fan contest.

More downtown apartments

Loft at West Station, a new four story apartment

complex to be constructed in the former Habitat for Humanity building on Salem Ave. in downtown Roanoke has been announced by developer Bill Chapman, featuring mostly one and two-bedroom units.

Moving shop

Countryside Classics retail gift shop in downtown Salem, rumored to be closing, is actually reopening at the Hunting Hills Shopping Center in Roanoke County.

Pittsylvania puts in

The Willows at Runk & Pratt, a new senior living community, has been planned for construction and opening with the golf course and former

Altavista Country Club in Hurt; an approximate \$6 million investment and 60 jobs in the first five years.

Prep x 2

In conjunction with site preparation for the new arrival of Eldor Corp. automotive parts plant at **Botetourt Center at Greenfield** industrial park in Botetourt County, the construction efforts will be used to prepare a second 14-acre site at an adjacent location for economic development recruiting.

PacLife in Hill City

Pacific Life Insurance Co. is establishing an office in Lynchburg by the end of the year, expected to employ

about 300 people during the next three years.

in addition to its ISO 9001 certification.

Tech pipe

Goodwill Industries of the Valleys 31 county 13 city service area has received \$1 million share of a US Dept. of Labor TechHire grant that is projected to serve about 700 people under the Careers in Technology program for technical-related jobs training.

Flying higher

Global Metal Finishing received the AS9100C certification; a stringent quality manufacturing designation for contract suppliers to the aerospace and defense industries;

Kids restaged

Roanoke Children's Theatre is moving to the Jefferson Center; offices and productions.

Workwear

Uniform Country, a uniform supply and work apparel retail store has opened at Tanglewood Mall in Roanoke County.

A star is born

Starcropolis, an experimental theatrical production featuring Roanoke's Mill Mountain Star as the subject and

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Send announcements to news@vbFRONT.com

A contact / source must be provided. Inclusions are not guaranteed and all submissions are subject to editing.

the venue, is planned for release on Sept. 4; a collaboration between Hollins University, Mill Mountain Theatre, Roanoke City, Roanoke Public Libraries, and theatre / community patrons.

Virginia pretty

The Augusta Garden Club (Staunton); Friends of the North Fork of Shenandoah

(Woodstock); Stuarts Draft High School; Climate Action (Harrisonburg); Blacksburg Middle School; Jackson River Enterprises (Covington); 329 Green Street (Staunton); Keep Bristol Beautiful; Sustain Abingdon; Gateway Streetscape Foundation (Collinsville); Joint Resident Council (Roanoke); and Warm Hearth Village (Blacksburg) were



FRONT

Global Metal Finishing



Sign at Cups Coffee & Tea

recipients among the 2016 "30 Grants in Thirty Days" **Keep Virginia Beautiful** litter prevention, recycling and beautification initiative.

Play ball

City of Salem will host the 2017 Carolina League All-Star (Baseball) Game.

Please and thank you

Cups Coffee & Tea in the Grandin neighborhood

of Roanoke made international news in mid July with the posting of a picture of its handwritten sign that read "Small coffee – \$5; Small coffee, please – \$3; Hello, one small coffee, please – \$1.75."

Fair weather not required

Salem Fair management reported an estimate of 350,000 visitors during the June 29 through July 10 event; a five percent increase over previous

seasons from 1988 to 2016, despite frequent rain showers.

Reasonable not same as advance

Virginia Supreme Court upheld the State's "At Will" employment standard in regard to a June case where an employee sued a company for not providing an advanced notice of termination; only an effective notice is required for either

or both parties when the employment is ending.

Decompressed

Bristol Compressors has laid off approximately 60 employees; citing low fuel prices and international slump in product demand.

Taming Monster, Linking LinkedIn

Open Data, Open Jobs, a new initiative, has been established through Virginia's Commonwealth Center for Advanced Research and Statistics that aggregates job listings into a singular data set; the pilot program hopes to attract an application developer to introduce a single source for schools and job applicants.

Lending access

Access National Mortgage has opened an office in downtown Roanoke at 26 Church Ave.

Snips and snails and puppy dog tails

Exotics and Aquatics pet store has opened at 5423 Williamson Road in Roanoke County.

Energetic

Central Virginia Community College has added an Energy Technology Career Studies Certificate to

its program offering, covering skills in solar power and renewable energy.

BBBS at VTCRC

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Virginia has partnered with **Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center** to offer a STEM (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics) mentoring program for middle school students to work, learn, and be exposed to a professional environment in related industries.

Trucking away

Volvo truck plant in Pulaski County is laying off about 300 jobs; an expected second round

move from the company's earlier second quarter announcement.

Roving over the pond

Overfinch (North America division) is locating its first US facility in Danville (Danville-Pittsylvania Regional Industrial Authority's Cyber Park); an approximate \$9 million investment and 40 new jobs in the next three years; the England-based company will use the new plant to engineer and develop parts for Range Rover vehicle luxury upgrades.

Meeting EPA reg for less

Apptech Solutions in Salem has developed an integrated reductive

metals treatment process that removes or reduces selenium levels in mining and industrial wastewater that is less costly than other existing biological treatment systems.

Three- into-one entry

Bradley Free Clinic, New Horizons Healthcare, and Child Health Investment Partnership have formed a united partnership to provide the Roanoke Valley with single-point of entry coordinated healthcare.

Hokie hotel

A new **Marriott Residence** Inn is planned for opening at the new University Crossroads mixed-use

construction project being developed at University City Blvd. and Prices Fork Rd. at Virginia Tech.

Wise move for security

University of Virginia College at Wise Oxbow Center is introducing a cyber security accelerator program within its technology offering.

Fore sale

Brookside Golf Course, a long time popular par three course off Williamson Road in Roanoke County since 1962, has been listed for sale.

Compiled by Tom Field



Apptech Solutions

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 blog, also available by link at vbFRONT.com.



Jost Daemmgen, TMEIC Corporation

TMEIC President & CEO Dale Guidry speaks with Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe during Hannover Messe 2016.

A tech hot spot— and cold >

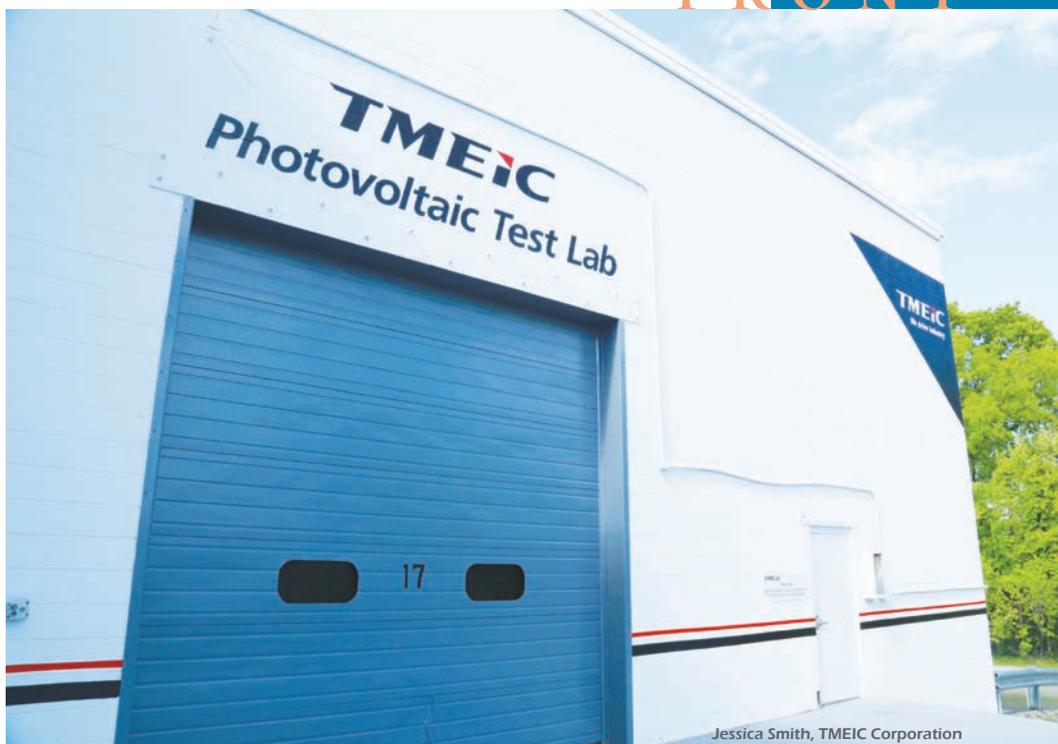
Executive Summary:

TMEIC is driving industry into the next generation; its new test lab is the latest entry gaining attention.

By Emily Alberts

When Toshiba and Mitsubishi join forces, great things are known to happen. Headquartered in Tokyo, Japan and with United States headquarters in Roanoke, VA, the Toshiba Mitsubishi-Electric Industrial Systems Corporation (TMEIC, pronounced “T-Mike”) is capturing attention all over the world and firmly placing the United States at the forefront of industrial technology.

TMEIC representatives recently joined President Obama and Virginia Governor



Jessica Smith, TMEiC Corporation

In addition to rigorous performance and electromagnetic compatibility tests, TMEiC's Photovoltaic Inverter Test Lab is capable of generating a wide range of environmental conditions.

Terry McAuliffe in Germany for the opening ceremonies of the world's foremost trade fair for industrial technology, 2016 Hannover Messe. For the first time in the Fair's history, the United States served as the Partner Country, sending a clear message to the world that "the United States is open for business," says U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker. With 200,000 attendees from over 70 countries, TMEiC took full advantage of the opportunity and was prominently featured throughout the event.

Beginning in 2000 as a partnership with General Electric out of Salem, VA, the company was originally focused primarily on the metals industry. After buying out the General Electric shares in 2011, an entirely new market space opened up and TMEiC's footprint expanded exponentially. The corporation now specializes in areas such as renewable energy, material handling, oil & gas, solar power, mining and testing as well as metals. U.S. subsidiary President and CEO Dale Guidry has been with TMEiC since its inception and has witnessed tremendous growth.

"We were growing so rapidly in the early 2000's and even now. We really needed more

space," Guidry explains. "We had a choice to stay in the valley but move to a new location in Roanoke, or to relocate entirely. We chose to stay."

In addition to the Roanoke location, TMEiC recently opened a one-of-a-kind, \$1.5 million purpose built photovoltaic inverter test facility in Salem just this year. "We're able to simulate extended periods of cold at below zero temperatures, extreme heat of more than 160 degrees Fahrenheit, and 85 percent relative humidity; all while the equipment is closely monitored inside the testing chamber," notes TMEiC's Renewable Energy Solutions General Manager, Donn Samsa.

TMEiC is committed to producing the most advanced and durable inverters in the world, and is focused on developing advanced automation solutions, large AC and DC motors, and variable frequency drive systems.

The new facility allows TMEiC to obtain UL certified products, which provides a huge advantage in the market. Further,



Jessica Smith, TMEIC Corporation

Guests look on as high humidity is simulated inside the TMEIC Photovoltaic Inverter Test Lab, one of many environmental conditions the \$1.5 million purpose-built facility is capable of generating.

the new lab provides expanded development and training opportunities. By continuing to develop, test and receive certifications, TMEIC is building a solid future as an industry leader.

With over 300 employees in Roanoke, the corporation is now bringing in larger customers and expanding its footprint even further. Notably, TMEIC recently received its first order of SOLAR WARE™ 2700 this year.

The system is a 1500V PV Inverter hailed as a “next-generation system.” These inverters

are used in utility-scale solar power facilities, some of which can boast up to two million solar panels. SOLAR WARE™ 2700 is the world’s largest class single unit capacity and achieves the world’s highest level of power conversion efficiency.

“Our big success is that we have designed and developed the product specifically for the North American market, and are thus able to capture a significant share of the U.S. market,” says Guidry.

What’s most surprising is that TMEIC only

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Signal Energy

TMEIC's Samurai 1500V photovoltaic inverters convert the sun's energy into usable power at utility-scale solar energy facilities like Signal Energy pictured above.

just entered the solar photovoltaic space in 2011, since prior to 2011 they were not permitted in that market space due to agreements with GE. However, their history with Toshiba is extremely rich, going back nearly four decades, and they were able to leverage that history to take their photovoltaic presence "from nothing to being the largest one today."

"We're aiming to increase our employment here for this business and also do more development work," Guidry says. "This is a world class operation and we're able to bring in top notch talent. Virginia Tech is an excellent resource pool."

The fact that the valley is exceptionally high-tech may not be especially well-known, but Guidry believes that is all about to change. He plans "to stay in the valley and grow the valley."

The successful multi-year extension of the 2015 solar Income Tax Credit, a 30 percent tax credit for solar systems on residential/commercial properties, will ensure the continued impressive growth of the solar market. The solar ITC has helped annual solar installation grow by over 1600 percent since it was first implemented in 2006.

The existence of the ITC through 2023 provides market certainty for companies to develop long-term investments that drive competition and technological innovation, which in turn, lowers costs for consumers (Solar Industries Energy Association, 2016 fact sheet).

With TMEIC's growing presence in the Roanoke Valley, the future is looking bright. 

TMEIC officially cuts the ribbon on its one-of-a-kind, \$1.5 million purpose-built photovoltaic (PV) inverter test facility in Salem, VA.



Jessica Smith, TMEIC Corporation

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Lisa shot a skunk once — Page 11



The total use (and abuse) of email has probably done more harm than good

— Page 25

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