

# Valley Business FRONT

**VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE  
BUSINESS JOURNAL**  
ROANOKE/NEW RIVER VALLEYS & REGION  
FREE • ISSUE 132 • SEPTEMBER 2019

**vbFRONT.com**

## The Business Connector

**Annette Patterson,**  
The Advancement Foundation

# Locally Owned Since 1956



Left to right: Chase Clark - Chief Commercial Credit Officer, Scott Leffel - EVP Market Executive, William Dixon - VP Business Banking, Brent Jenkins - VP Commercial Lending, Paul Phillips - President & CEO, Neal Cummings, SVP Commercial Lending. *Not pictured: Brian Taylor - Commercial Lending*

**LOCAL DECISIONS ON LOANS.  
ALL DEPOSITS INVESTED LOCALLY.**

**Business Checking & Savings • Treasury Services • Commercial Loans**  
**10 Local Branches • Online • Mobile**



Federally insured by NCUA.

**Business Banking (540) 378-8966**

**Commercial Lending (540) 904-0901**

**Personal Banking (540) 389-0244**

**[www.freedomfirst.com/contact-our-business-team](http://www.freedomfirst.com/contact-our-business-team)**



# WELCOME to the FRONT

Our FRONTcover story is about making connections. What Annette Patterson and gang do with programs blasting out of the Town of Vinton is exactly what we do with the words we share out of this business journal.

If we're not putting you in touch with others in your business, professional, vocational or community activities, we're connecting with your passion (we've been told). Your passion to build a venture, create an enterprise (small or large), elevate an organization, make an impact—in your selected market, and quite often, here in our local community.

The funny thing is, you don't have to be super popular, a player, a beloved social butterfly, a trend-setter, a successful leader or celebrity to be or to stay connected. And though it helps, you don't have to be rich or powerful. You just need to be observant. With a willingness to reach out and engage a bit.

And you should.

Because there's one thing we're sure of. Being disconnected is not a good thing. You're endangering your mental faculties if you isolate yourself. If you find yourself slipping off the edge like that (or suspect someone is in that position), let's talk. We've got to watch out for each other, right? Hold ourselves together in this often topsy-turvy-tinker-toy life.

  
**Tom Field**



## *Ginger's* JEWELRY

### We buy

- Diamonds
- Gold
- Platinum
- Silver
- Coins
- Brand Watches

3565 Electric Road • Roanoke VA • 540-563-5559

## Valley Business FRONT

### COVER STORY

#### DEPARTMENTS

# 8

## Advancing Small Business

**Corporate Image 20**

**Local chambers 26**

**Maker Mart 34**

### PERSPECTIVES

Tech Whisperer 18

Financial Figures 19

Business Operations 24

A Little Insight 25

Wellness 30

Good Work 31

### REVIEWS & OPINIONS

On Tap from the Pub 38

There's Something

Happening Here 39

Reviews 42

### FRONTLINES

FRONT'n About 44

Career FRONT 54

FRONT Notes 58

**vbFRONT.com**

“Every Kirk needs  
a Spock — Page 24



Cover photography of Annette Patterson by Tom Field.





**MAKE  
FOOD.**

HOT KITCHEN

BAKING KITCHEN

BRICK OVEN

1500+ SQUARE FEET

FREE STORAGE

YOUR FOOD BIZ HAS A HOME AT

**C R A F T E R I A**

H A N D M A D E F O O D & G O O D S

LEARN MORE:

16 WEST CHURCH AVENUE

540.550.6538 OR [ALEX@CRAFTERIA.COMMUNITY](mailto:ALEX@CRAFTERIA.COMMUNITY)



**SELL  
FOOD.**

FOOD WALK UP WINDOW

"PANTRY" IN MAKERS MARKET

DINING ROOM & BAR

SMALL WARES

ALL FREE WITH MEMBERSHIP

# Valley Business FRONT

P.O. Box 1041  
Salem, VA 24153  
(540) 389-9945  
www.vbFRONT.com

## Staff

Publisher / Creative Director	Tom Field tfield@vbFRONT.com (540) 389-9945
Interim Editor	Gene Marrano
Advertising	Dan Dowdy (540) 797-7943 ads@vbFRONT.com (540) 389-9945
Graphic Designer	Nicholas Vaassen nvaassen@berryfield.com
Production	Berryfield, Inc. PO Box 1041 Salem, VA 24153 (540) 389-9945

## Departmental Contacts

Advertising	ads@vbFRONT.com
Subscriptions	info@vbFRONT.com
News / Releases	news@vbFRONT.com
Admin / Ops	info@vbFRONT.com

**(540) 389-9945**  
**vbFRONT.com**  
**morefront.blogspot.com**

© Copyright 2019; Valley Business FRONT, LLC. All rights reserved. Reproduction or use of this publication in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. Information within Valley Business FRONT is obtained from sources considered reliable, but cannot be guaranteed. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the ownership. Valley Business FRONT is primarily distributed to subscribers by mail, digitally and select locations throughout the Roanoke Valley, New River Valley, and western Virginia.

# SEPTEMBER



Brian Bongard



Ally Bowersock



Mike Leigh



Nanette Levin



Michael Shelton



Nicholas Vaassen

## Editorial Advisory Board

Valley Business FRONT has organized an Editorial Advisory Board in order to help direct coverage. FRONT selected a group of diverse business professionals, who will serve as a sounding board throughout the rotational term.

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



Bruce Bryan



Dan Dowdy



Tom Field



Gene Marrano



Ian Price



Pugh & Rotanz



Kaitlyn Van Buskirk

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 40.

## 2019 Members

- Nancy Agee** Carilion (Wellness)  
**Laura Bradford** Claire V (Retail)  
**Nicholas C. Conte** Carilion (Legal)  
**Warner Dalhouse** Retired (Finance)  
**John Garland** Garland Properties (Development)  
**Nancy Gray** Hollins University (Education)  
**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** ACI (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.

“...they would see sparks flying

— Page 35

“When customers are ignored online, they will either shun the establishment or move on to a different one — Page 18

twitter  
facebook

Website: [www.vbfront.com](http://www.vbfront.com)  
Facebook: [vb front](https://www.facebook.com/vbfront)  
Twitter: [@vbfront](https://twitter.com/vbfront)  
Blog: [morefront.blogspot.com](http://morefront.blogspot.com)



# Advancing Small Business

## The Advancement Foundation, HIVE, Innovation Mill >

**Executive Summary:**  
*The Advancement  
Foundation has helped  
hundreds of individuals  
begin or grow their  
business venture...from  
its operational core in  
the Town of Vinton.*

**By Tom Field**

"Engineering Opportunities..." says Annette Patterson about her organization's tagline. "I think that describes what we're trying to do... I don't know—what do you think?"

That early question says a lot about Annette Patterson, founder and director of The Advancement Foundation. Here's a person who has all the credentials to be a know-it-all. A record of accomplishment in business development and strategic consultation that confirms she has answers. A trail of people and organizations who applaud her performance and affirm her role in highest regard when it comes to support and advocacy.

And yet she asks as many questions as she does sharing answers.

In fact, she's not going to let this interview conclude until we have materials, resources, reports, charts and graphs tracking her "tri-divisional company" activities with statistical data for verification. Across the street from her operation, sits the Town of Vinton's library. But you get the feeling there's no need to cross the street if your interest is small business, here and now. Patterson is the librarian for small business.

There is a difference, though. She's not going to call you down to "be quiet."





## Three...for now

Annette Patterson oversees three ventures that support small business development. There's little doubt she might spilt off even more, and there's all the reason in the world to suspect her wheels are spinning in other directions. But for now, her work involves founding and directing a business training and development operation called The Advancement Foundation; a multi-tenant business startup incubator facility called The HIVE; and the newest enterprise, Innovation Mill, deployed this year and designed to facilitate scaling for newer existing businesses indicating significant growth potential. (See sidebars)

The Advancement Foundation is the mothership generating the most notice. That's primarily due to a business program called The Gauntlet, and the resulting chatter from so many participants who have rather quickly swaggered into headlines of news and media (like our FRONT business journal here, which has featured multiple enrollees over the years). The Gauntlet includes a competition in addition to the training program, and 2019 marked the fifth annual awards ceremony. Winners—and there are a lot of them—accept generous packages of business support and resources from each class; and this year, that was comprised of 122 entrepreneurs (established or budding). Full disclosure: FRONT is a sponsor of The Gauntlet.

**The Advancement Foundation / Gauntlet, HIVE, Innovation Mill staff stands by a table showcasing some of the products entrepreneurs are moving through the programs.**



**The HIVE houses new business startups in this complex off Pollard Street in downtown Vinton at the Business Incubation Center.**

The first Gauntlet in 2015 hosted 15 entrepreneurs. This year, the program, which Patterson calls “a community development project,” expanded to bring on board over 200 mentors, crossed geographic borders into Roanoke, Botetourt, Alleghany Highlands, and awarded over a quarter million dollars in cash and in-kind prizes to the “graduates.”

Engage anyone from The Advancement Foundation and Gauntlet, HIVE, or Innovation Mill, and you immediately sense the buzz of enthusiasm. That’s to be expected when you’re communicating with individuals who are excited about building their businesses. And such a response is what attracted Patterson to this whole notion of small business support in a community development type model.

## “Nobody Said No”

“I was in higher ed for almost twenty years,” says Annette Patterson, describing her path to today. She served in positions of development and institutional advancement for Stetson University (Florida) and Salem Academy (Winston-Salem, NC). Fundraising and campaigning were top priorities, but she also got to witness how community development plays into that kind of collaboration.

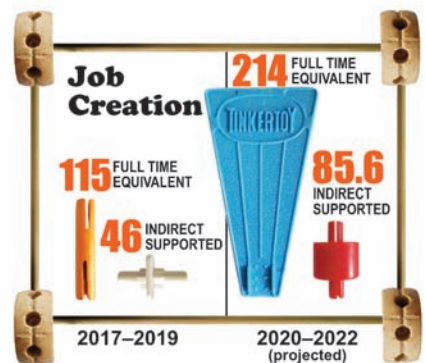
“Helping in community development and skills-building... those were the things I loved,” Patterson says. “It was the catalyst (coupled with the bad economy of 2007, she admits) for an orchestrated change” in her professional life.



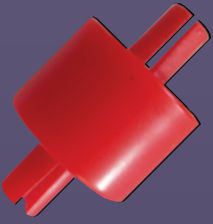
# Performance Metrics

Recently, 31 alumni of Gauntlet and Innovation Mill were surveyed to supplement a report on outcomes from The Advancement Foundation.

SOURCE: The Advancement Foundation; 2019



Business ideas take tangible shape as they sit on a table in The Advancement Foundation's conference room.



Patterson, who has a bachelor's degree in business and a master's in clinical psychology, moved to Smith Mountain Lake in 2007. She has three daughters and decided she wanted to make an impact in this region.

"When I was thinking about these ideas, I wanted to BETA test the Gauntlet in Vinton, and, well... nobody said no." (The first Gauntlet finales took place at the Grandin CoLab before moving to Vinton).

Following one classic definition of entrepreneurship as "the pursuit of opportunity without regard to resources currently controlled" Patterson began meeting and talking to a lot of players.

"I'd like to say I knew it would work, but..." she doesn't

# The Gauntlet Lineup

The 2019 Class of The Gauntlet, like the previous four years, was comprised of diversified business interests. Here's what the most recent entrepreneurs brought to the program to advance their ventures.

## Academics Accelerated

*(personalized learning)*

## Advanced Racking

*(solar mounting systems)*

## Art Squared

*(artist venue in Covington)*

## Blink Optometry

*(eye exams in comfort)*

## Blue Gate Films

*(cinematic film production)*

## Blue Ridge Misting Systems

*(cooling stations at events)*

## BoCo CARES

*(wellness cooperative in Botetourt)*

## Born Again Custom Woodworking

*(custom furniture from reclaimed wood)*

## Caffe Museo

*(museum of antique coffee grinders)*

## Celebration Depot

*(gaming and party center in Alleghany Highlands)*

## Clean Valley Council

*(environmental education and cleanup agency)*

## Crooked Road Kombucha

*(kombucha tea)*

## Downshift Outfitters

*(e-mountain bikes at Explore Park)*

## Dr Auto Spa

*(car wash and detailing)*

## Dumplestiltskins

*(food truck with fairy tale theme)*

## East Coast Cannalytics

*(hemp testing lab)*

## EasyWorkings

*(artificial intelligent process control)*

## FAVE

*(cognitive impairment consultation and support)*

## Formable Grabber

*(specialty tool manufacturer)*

## The Foundry

*(healthy, independent citizen engagement)*

## The Harvest Collective

*(food scrap collection and compost service)*

## Honeycomb Grove

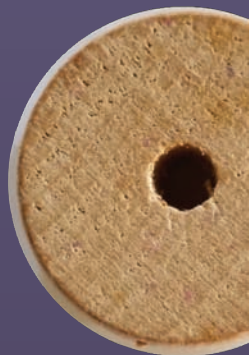
*(meadery and honeybee conservation)*



have to finish the sentence. There was hardly any guarantee the building of such a foundation would survive, much less even the digging of the footers in the very beginning. Tenacity had to rule the day when you follow the trail of where Patterson went, and who she associated with, just to start the ball rolling.

Just like the way the Gauntlet program teaches entrepreneurs to make connections and find resources, Annette Patterson had to do the very same thing to build her own enterprise.

She found individuals to support the endeavor. Stakeholders to invest one way or another. Mentors to join in and help. Volunteers to contribute time and talent. Municipalities and schools to jump in the lineup. Corporations to sponsor. And finally... a big piece in the tinker-toy arsenal she was



### **InStead Marketing**

*(event management)*

### **IVO Limited**

*(mobile device charging)*

### **Jasmine Beane**

*(fashion and design)*

### **JFIT**

*(fitness for older adults)*

### **Keely Massie Photography**

*(personal brand photographer)*

### **La Michoacana**

*(popsicle shop)*

### **Loz Analytics**

*(automation solutions)*

### **Michel's Pizzeria**

*(pizza shop near Homestead Hotel and Bacova Beer)*

### **Mike and Mo's**

*(upcoming restaurant and entertainment in Salem)*

### **Mobile Unit Massage**

*(on location massage service)*

### **Olde Town Diner**

*(southern style restaurant)*

### **Outdoor Empowerment Coalition**

*(low-cost, no-cost outdoor recreation)*

### **Persunality**

*(youth substance abuse avoidance game)*

### **Queen's Vegan Café**

*(no soy or GMO caterer)*

### **Quest Knight Enterprises**

*(unmanned systems)*

### **Revival Clothing**

*(original apparel to inspire)*

### **Roanoke Neuromuscular**

*(pain relief and management)*

### **Roanoke Rags**

*(denim specialty fashion)*

### **RollerSk8r**

*(media for skaters and rinks)*

### **The Salad Factory**

*(healthy food options)*

### **Sonny Side Café**

*(competitive pricing food service)*

### **Tea Total**

*(craft tea, toast, non-alcoholic alternative)*

### **Thrive by Heart**

*(consultation and mentoring)*

### **Tom's Cables**

*(custom audio cables for home systems)*

### **The VR Center**

*(gaming center and entertainment)*

### **Valley Cryotherapy**

*(cold body exposure for wellness and pain relief)*

### **Verz Trucking Company**

*(delivery service)*

### **Why Knot**

*(boat charter on Smith Mountain Lake)*



**Innovation Mill sits one side street away from Vinton's Business Incubation Center**

fitting together... grants to subsidize her program.

GoVirginia (particularly for its piece to commit to rural development) was a big score for Patterson; and she also intends to leverage her own \$1 million Community Investment Fund. USDA funding and support from organizations like AmeriCorps and municipalities all contribute to the operational resources needed to keep moving forward.



**GO Virginia is one of The Advancement Foundation's funding sources; a business-led economic development initiative to stimulate workforce development [ [govirginia.org](http://govirginia.org) ].**

## Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow

From 2007 to 2010, Annette Patterson worked in strategic planning and grant writing. She acquired property in Vinton in 2011, and three years later, “threw down the gauntlet” with her idea for a community-type business program and competition. In 2015, using a CBL grant, she opened the HIVE, a business incubator, and says the first tenants weren’t even located in Vinton, with the exception of Twin Creeks Brewing (one of the most publicized successful case studies).

As an independent agency, Patterson says she “can take risks... can take heat” that other organizations may not be able to do as a result of having to answer to institutional policies and bureaucracies.


Today, these ventures continue to operate and grow, even as they have infused with programing from players like Vinton War Memorial hosting, Botetourt County’s economic development department, Roanoke City’s 601 Inc. (on 11th Street Northwest), and Dabney S. Lancaster Community College in Alleghany County, to name a few.

“It’s a ‘club-like’ environment, but still serious business,” says Patterson, whose husband Patrick is the principal at Roanoke Catholic.

That’s a sentiment shared by many who have played with the various pieces.

That kind of comradery could play well for Patterson and company as they move to year 2020 and beyond. She cites statewide expansion and possible franchising as a goal.

Three-hundred-fifty alumni to date is a nice army to have backing you up.

Even if you still ask a lot of questions. 

**Encouragement, advice, and reminders of its resources adorn the walls as The Advancement Foundation markets its programs; similar banners have shown up on Main Streets in communities where the program is expanding.**







**Kathleen Carr**



**Debbie Custer**



**Sheri Winesett**

## What people in the program are saying

### Internal

*"I have to say, I feel like The Gauntlet is 'my child.' I'm always moving pieces [since the 3rd annual program in 2017] and though it's a four-month long program, it's really a year in planning. I'm looking forward to seeing how we license and franchise this. We're a small boat going into deeper waters!"*

**Kathleen Carr** is the director of small business development for The Advancement Foundation and Gauntlet business program and competition. She has a degree in hospitality and tourism from Virginia Tech, worked at the Beliveau winery estate, and served with the AmeriCorps program, which was how she became involved with her current position.

*"I love what I do! I could be described as an alchemist; and my interest is all about the high growth opportunities in the product development cycle. From biofuels to pharmaceutical to medical to food and industrial applications, this is an incredibly expanding industry."*

**Debbie Custer** is the founder and chief executive officer of Coeus Research, a tenant of Innovation Mill; but she also oversees the center. She had a formidable position marketing Quibell spring water beverages and launched her newest venture to help entrepreneurs navigate the consumer market, focusing right now on the CBD oil craze.

*"Innovation Mill provides a funnel for companies, particularly for help and referrals. I'm blown away by our outcomes already; we exceeded our goals for Q1. We're really good at showing 'proof of concept' and we're continuing to expand our entrepreneurial network. Our reach—to Botetourt County, Covington and Alleghany Highlands, along with our collaborate efforts with institutions like Virginia Western Community College STEM program, CPCS Virginia Tech power and energy, Dabney S. Lancaster Community College, Roanoke College interns, and collaborations with prototype design from industry experts like TREAD... these are the high level connections we're making. That's what it's all about."*

**Sheri Winesett** was recently appointed chief innovation officer for Innovation Mill. Former executive director of the Botetourt County Chamber of Commerce, she has served as

a business coach, strategic development educator, and management consultant and works with teams to improve functional alignment to meet visions and grow opportunities.

## Program Participant

*"The Gauntlet is a real world view on how to plan things accordingly... the organization of your business, taxes, all the areas you need to address. I would have done the program last year, but I wanted to have my patent first. The program gives a 360-degree view on how to build a viable business. I like the fact we're working with people who have been here before, saying 'I would do this, I wouldn't do that.' And it's valuable for connections... a person knows this person who's in the same place—that has been most helpful."*

**Nick Morgan** is president of Formable Grabber, a tool designed to help mechanics and perform tricky tasks like unlocking cars, using its unique shaping capability to reach difficult areas. Morgan also is "continually learning" about business and entrepreneurship. He won an elevator pitch contest at Radford University and continues to stay in touch with Dr. Ian Clelland, professor of management and the chair of RU's Davis College of Business and Economics and his business programs.

## Mentor

*"Embarking on entrepreneurship can be an uncertain time as people go outside of their comfort zone and put their life's dreams and hard-earned dollars into building a business. The Advancement Foundation team guides entrepreneurs through every aspect of a business start-up. The team's success with The Gauntlet, helping people go from business idea to reality, builds a culture of confidence in our workforce. It drives innovation, boosts tax revenues and brings commitment to local projects that build community."*

**Becky Freemal** is the director of communications and marketing at Virginia Tech's Pamplin College of Business. Known in the community for her role as a television news reporter and anchor for more than two decades, Freemal earned an Emmy and Edward R. Murrow awards for journalism and community impact. She is also a mentor and a board chair for The Advancement Foundation, and was the emcee for Gauntlet's award ceremony.

“

The program gives a 360-degree view on how to build a viable business. I like the fact we're working with people who have been here before, saying 'I would do this, I wouldn't do that.' And it's valuable for connections... a person knows this person who's in the same place—that has been most helpful.



Nick Morgan



Becky Freemal



## Tech Whisperer

By Spencer Pugh  
and Maggie Rotanz

**Executive Summary:**  
*Introducing our new  
column on business-  
related social media  
and other digital issues.*


## Top reasons why people unfollow your business >

For someone who's never really delved into the social media world, keeping up with Facebook and Instagram for your business can seem nonessential. But, according to a study done by Statista in 2016, not replying to people on these platforms is one of the top 6 reasons why users unfollow business accounts. We can't stress enough how important it is to interact with people online, because those interactions are potential leads!

If you're wondering, the other 5 reasons are: too much promotional content, irrelevant information, too many posts, use of slang or jargon, and being too quiet (in that order). Think about it this way: If someone in real life is constantly in your face trying to sell you something, blabbing on about topics you're not interested in, talking way too much, using weird lingo, or standing in the corner not saying a word... they're probably not the most tempting person to keep around.

Now, imagine if, in real life, you gave someone a compliment or asked them a question, and they just ignored you and continued blabbing on about something else... That would be a little off-putting, so don't do it on your business platforms. If that doesn't convince you, hear this: When customers are ignored online, they will either shun the establishment, or move on to a different one. For example: At around 4pm on a Friday, a potential customer reaches out to you via Facebook messenger inquiring about a menu. You don't see this until Monday. There's a good chance that person had a great night at the restaurant down the street.

### Here's a good way to make sure that doesn't happen:

Go to your Facebook business page's inbox and click "Automated Responses" on the left-hand side. From here, select "Instant Reply" and type up a response that will answer any frequently asked questions. This way, less potential customers will slip through the cracks. And if you haven't already, download the Facebook Pages Manager App on your smart phone. This app will make it easier to navigate your business page on Facebook without getting all caught up in your personal Facebook notifications. 

*Harvest Digital Marketing helps local businesses turn online subscribers and followers into paying and loyal customers through digital media creation and marketing strategies. Contact us with tech questions or comments: Instagram: @harvestdm 540-353-4013 | hello@harvestdigitalmarketing.co Harvestdigitalmarketing.co*



## It's never too early to plan for a business sale >

Most advice on selling a small business assumes you're doing \$1 million or more annually. The SBA defines small businesses as having as many as 1500 employees or as much as \$38.5 million in average annual receipts. I don't know about you, but that sounds big to me.

Fortunately, smaller business owners can adapt. Even if a sale is decades away, working now to improve business viability for a buyer should make your business more profitable now.

**Think scalability** — Scalability is all about creating systems. Systems for handling customers, processing products, recording financials, hiring and training employees. The easily repeatable processes you create will help increase profits today and business value tomorrow.


Too often, business owners keep critical business information in their head. Documenting even the most mundane tasks can increase business value and improve current operations efficiencies.

Scalability is about adding significant, measurable revenue with repeated processes. The first time you do something tends to cost a lot more in time and money than the next. Owners managing everything in their head have a tough time scaling up. Employees can document and refine your systems to create quicker growth and more free time for you.

**Get accurate with your financials** — Keep real-time records of your financials while breaking them down against different company revenue streams. Any buyer is going to want details about your cash flow and margins; so should you. You might find what's keeping you the busiest offers the lowest margin.

**Balance client demands** — Ideally, your business will have no one client representing more than 10% of your revenue. This is good business sense while you're managing your business and more critical when it comes time to sell. If a few clients represent the bulk of your income, diversify. Being dependent on a small number of customers is risky.

**Review contracts** — Keep the agreements you have with regular clients up to date. The value of your business will be based on what you can verify as long-term income. Consider offering incentives for customers to extend contract duration.

Creating strategies to make you less important to your business success creates a more valuable entity to sell while developing a more sustainable, profitable business today. It can be tough to plan for your obsolescence in a business you built, but it's the smart thing to do. 



## Financial Figures

By Michael Shelton

**Executive Summary:**  
*There's that term again – scalability. But how to get there?*



Penny Kerr

all photos: Ian Price





Corporate Image

## A different cut in downtown Roanoke >

### Executive Summary:

*This isn't your grandfather's barbershop.*

By Ian Price

While most sections of downtown Roanoke's Church Avenue are lined with busy shops and restaurants—or frustrated people trying to find a parking spot—the city block around Century Plaza Park did go through some recent hard times. Construction of the rooftop Hampton Inn hotel (stacked on a parking garage) took a while and would cause the busy street to close there at

times, meaning a lack of valuable car or foot traffic. Several surrounding businesses didn't survive the lull, leaving empty storefronts. Among the businesses that did soldier on: a barbershop that's been in operation since 1946. You might be surprised who is running the show now however.

Corporate Image now has its second female owner in fact. Penny Kerr says she doesn't know exactly how long the hotel construction took but she does know the work closed that block of Church Avenue in some capacity for three Christmas seasons in a row. Kerr says "We were counting down each Christmas because that's your busiest time." That's all in the past now, going back several years to the Hampton ribbon cutting. The holiday season is the busiest time for most people in the hair industry. Kerr says they "persevered" because of a loyal list of clients. She's been the owner for about 7 years.



**OCTOBER 26, 2019**  
12PM TO 5PM

WITH PREMIUM ADMISSION AT 11

50+ CRAFT BREWERIES | LOCAL EATS  
COOKING WITH BEER DEMOS  
LIVE MUSIC | HOMEBREW COMPETITION

VIRGINIA TECH CORPORATE  
RESEARCH CENTER RESEARCH CENTER  
1600 INNOVATION DRIVE

**WWW.BLACKSBURGBREWDO.COM**

PRESENTING  
SPONSOR:



PLATINUM









Karis Feydo and Staci Thompson


When she took over the shop it was a major leap of faith. Kerr had just settled in at a Valley View Mall area salon at the time, ready to continue growing her list of female clients. "I came down and saw the shop and knew it was something special," Kerr says. While she had no problem cutting men's hair it wasn't her main interest then. When it comes to getting your haircut, men and women are not equal.

Women usually have more interest in changing their hair color and getting it cut. Both cost more if you have longer hair. While the "man bun" is in style, that hasn't shifted the thinking that women getting their hair done in a day will result in more money being spent than by the same number of guys. So ... why work at a barbershop when you will mostly get men?

There are advantages to cutting and styling men. It's a numbers game for one thing: the haircuts usually take less time, allowing barbers to fit more clients into a work day. That's what Kerr has learned since she took a chance and moved from the mall-area salon to owning Corporate Image Barbershop. She didn't want to be "a hairstylist masquerading as a barber." So she went back to school to get her barber license. "I now have a cosmetology and barber's license," notes Kerr. (I for one definitely

want anyone holding a straight razor near my head to have the proper training.)

The problem with this business model is you need a large list of clients. Kerr says when they first took over, people didn't know they were available for walk-ins. So they hit the streets raising awareness, inviting people in and going to events to get their name out there. Kerr credits Karis Feydo for helping in this regard. "Karis is the whole other half of this shop for 7 years," Kerr says, adding that Karis "had to completely build her clientele from nothing" after she relocated from elsewhere in Virginia. (Staci Thompson cuts hair as well at Corporate Image) They also do fundraisers and charity events, like fixing hair for contestants in the Miss Virginia Wheelchair Pageant.

Kerr says the Corporate Image clientele consists in large part of men getting a haircut on their lunch break from a law firm, some other white collar job downtown, and judges. You can ask for names but she's probably not going to tell you. There's another reason clients keep coming back. Penny has stories of big business deals getting sealed there - some with a handshake during a haircut. It's in keeping with the "Corporate" part of the shop's name, perhaps; but she is sworn to secrecy. That will also keep those would-be "Masters of the Universe" coming back. 





# Business Operations

By Mike Leigh

## Executive Summary:

*Numbers are great but what do they really mean? How do you use them?*

## Numerical perspective >

37 billion tons of carbon dioxide were released to the atmosphere in 2018.

76 billion opioid pills were distributed in the US from 2006-2012.


22 trillion dollars of national debt.

We're bombarded by numbers every day. The media loves to share large numbers like these, but by themselves, they have little value.

I'm an "analytical." What that means is that I like to live life according to facts and logic. Numbers like these irritate me when reported by the media with no perspective provided because they are meant to appeal to our emotions. How much CO<sub>2</sub> has been released each year? Is it accumulating and by how much? How many opioid pills is that per person? How many other types of pain pills have been distributed? What is the trend? How much debt do we have compared to gross domestic product? Answers to these questions provide perspective.

In business, perspective of your numbers is critical. Revenue, cost, customer satisfaction and employee engagement scores mean nothing by themselves. You need to put numbers like these in perspective to really understand the health of your operations. To gain perspective, consider these strategies:

- Use ratios – Divide your key measurements by another number. What is your revenue PER customer, or PER employee, or PER transaction? What are your scrap costs PER sales, or PER product?
- Plot trends – Take your key measurements and plot them over time. Is revenue increasing or decreasing? How has your employee engagement survey trended the past 10 years?
- Use more than averages – We love to use average numbers. Averages are helpful, but they are simply not good enough to run your operations. Suppose on average your business gets 200 customers/week. Is that enough information? Which days of the week or hours of the day are busiest? How much week to week variation is there, and why?
- Use visual graphs – A picture does indeed provide more meaning than just words. So take those numbers and graph them. Line, bar and pie charts put your numbers in perspective and help you "see" what is happening.

Finally, if you are not an "analytical" and the thought of doing this is not appealing (you know who you are!), then find someone to support you. Every Kirk needs a Spock. It's only logical. 

Send your questions or comments to [Mike@OpXSolutionsllc.com](mailto:Mike@OpXSolutionsllc.com)



## Invisible advertising >

### Advertising<sup>2</sup>Get Noticed

I'm convinced some ads are invisible.

Well, they certainly take up space or air, but they get skipped or ignored more than spam on a Monday morning. You know the ads I'm talking about – the tire ads that used to run in the sports section listing every available size and price, the radio commercials for the local company that tell you they believe in quality or have been in business since some year way back when, and of course the screaming car dealers appearing in commercials that run on TV. Sure you may have a passing awareness someone is saying or sharing something, but as soon as those attempts reach your eyes or ears, you're gone. Zero interest (and not the kind of deal those same car guys are trying to sell you).

Basically – those ads are ignored. Or more directly, they are invisible.


### The Difference<sup>4</sup>You

Why do companies insist on using the same tired tactics when trying to vie for your interest, attention, or even better, when trying to get your direct response to their marketing and advertising? The answer may be a simple one – and it likely takes you back to junior high school...

It's probably fear. Or maybe it's because "everyone else is doing it."

Businesses are afraid to make their advertisements different. One car dealer shouts at the TV audience so the other one decides they have to yell at their radio listeners. Neither has figured out – at that point – no one is really listening (or watching or reading). Yet it continues.

Wise marketers use their platforms to gain access, to get attention, or to create interest. Step outside of the norm, color outside of the lines, and think outside of the box... whatever you do, get away from the advertising templates that have embedded themselves into your industry. The purpose is to build awareness and get noticed.

That almost never happens with invisible ads. 

“...those ads are ignored...  
they are invisible



## A Little Insight

By Bruce C. Bryan

**Executive Summary:**  
*It's time to shift gears  
if your advertising  
is not working.*



**Grant Holmes**



**Michelle Darby**

## Local chambers tap new leaders >

### Executive Summary:

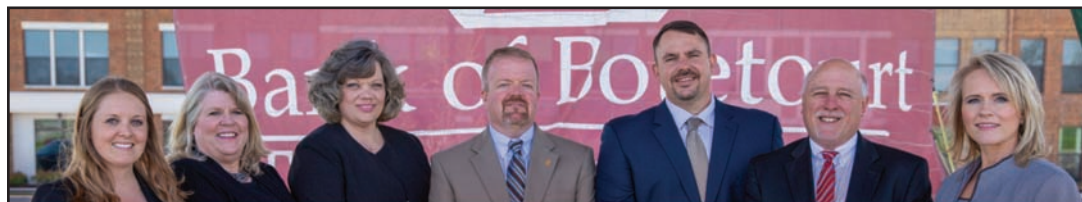
*Two area chambers have seen new leaders take the helm this year. Michelle Darby began with the Salem-Roanoke County Chamber of Commerce in February. Grant Holmes started at the Botetourt Chamber of Commerce on May 27th.*

**By Nanette Levin**

### Michelle Darby, Executive Director, Salem-Roanoke County Chamber of Commerce

Darby spent the past 16 years at Anthem overseeing the sales and marketing team for the Federal Employee Program (FEP). This involved creating events, dealing with members one-on-one, website development and other promotional material creation concerning the 14 states she supervised from Maine to California.

Darby says she's focusing on the Chamber's mission statement: creating, promoting,



Taking care of your  
banking. loans. savings. investments.  
**BUSINESS.**



**Bank of Botetourt**  
*Taking Care of You*



[www.bankofbotetourt.com](http://www.bankofbotetourt.com)

# EXECUTIVE PROFILE

developing and supporting quality business opportunities. "I continue to be impressed and blown away by the people in the community, the business owners in the community and the support," she says. "People love where they live and it shows."

Initiatives she's spearheaded include the Let's Get Down to Business series, which was created to showcase topics of interest for small to medium-sized businesses. "We want to offer programming and information and training to our business partners that is affordable, cost-effective and time sensitive," Darby says. "We asked our membership and that is one of the things they said they wanted." Topics have included human resources, financial planning, social media and branding. The Salem-Roanoke County Chamber also organized a Restaurant Week in July and a customer service excellence program in

August. Last month is also when they held the second annual Kegs & Barrels event at Green Hill Park.

Darby notes that she's been collaborating with the Roanoke Regional Chamber for events, networking opportunities and through Valley Life magazine, a publication of the Regional Chamber. "Joyce [Waugh, President & CEO] has been very supportive," Darby says. That includes sharing lessons learned the hard way. "Because we're both chambers, we tend to serve on a lot of the same boards, so we collaborate that way as well," she states.

Darby was born and raised in Salem and continues to reside there. "I'm an avid music lover and outdoor person and runner and believer in the community," she says.

Annual membership fees start at \$100 for



## Steve & Debbie Miller

Two different recoveries in the same year

## from two big recoveries TO TWO BIG BASS!

*"When Debbie had back surgery and I injured myself shoveling snow, we both needed a higher level of care than home health could provide. LifeWorks Rehab helped us get back to doing the things we love faster than ever!"*



**Raleigh Court Health  
& Rehabilitation Center**

1527 Grandin Rd SW | Roanoke, VA 24015

(540) 252-5498 | [www.RaleighCtHealthRehab.com](http://www.RaleighCtHealthRehab.com)





## Upcoming events >

### Upcoming Botetourt Chamber events

#### The Emerging Leadership Series

- Sept. 19    Leading Teams for Growth, Robyn Tuck, Virginia Western Community College
- Oct. 24    Human Resources Skills, Kathy Martin, Roanoke College
- Nov. 14    Influence Without Authority, Jennifer Havens, Virginia Western Community College
- Dec. 12    Critical and Creative Thinking, Scott Crawford, Virginia Tech

This series provides networking and learning opportunities with colleagues in sessions taught by leading area educational institutions. Cost to attend is \$549 for series and \$199 for a single day. Email [info@botetourtchamber.com](mailto:info@botetourtchamber.com) to register.

### Upcoming Salem-Roanoke County Chamber of Commerce events

- Sept. 18    Break Glass in Case of Emergency at Hotel Roanoke, 7:30 a.m. breakfast, 8-9 a.m. programming; \$25 members, \$30 non-members. Program is focused on being prepared with IT, communications plans and other crisis strategies.
- Oct. 18    Senior kit assembly at Feeding America in partnership with Richfield, 9-noon plus food truck co-networking with Roanoke Regional Chamber afterwards. No cost for volunteers.
- Nov.        Open house at Chamber with canned food donations and upcoming year programming discussion
- Dec. 7      Gingerbread Festival at Salem Public Library

For more information visit [s-rcchamber.org](http://s-rcchamber.org) or call (540) 387-0267

individuals and \$185 for businesses with a sliding cost scale based on the number of full-time, active employees. Offices are

located at 611 East Main Street, Salem, VA. Visit the office, call (540) 387-0276 or go to [s-rcchamber.org](http://s-rcchamber.org) for more information.



**Adding a little bouncy fur to one loving family at a time!**

**This is a passion for me...not a job!**  
– Jennifer Rekowski

**New Litter of Mini Goldendoodles Coming Soon**

**A RESPONSIBLE & CARING BREEDER IN SOUTHSIDE VIRGINIA PROVIDING ADORABLE, LOYAL & TOP-CHOICE FAMILY-FRIENDLY DOGS SINCE 2014**



**Posh Doodles of Virginia**

**434-728-3294**


# EXECUTIVE PROFILE

## Grant Holmes, Executive Director, Botetourt Chamber of Commerce

Holmes brings an entrepreneurial background to his role with particular focus on business development, strategic planning and marketing. Born and raised in Ohio, he moved to Roanoke six years ago, had a brief stint in Florida, then moved back here in December of 2018 where he ran his branding and marketing company prior to being hired by the Chamber.

"I've probably helped start, mentor, advise somewhere between 50 and 100 companies," he says. This has occurred through his participation in the Gauntlet, the Advancement Foundation (the Gauntlet's sponsor) and SCORE. "I love seeing businesses succeed," Holmes states. "This is where my passion is."

Holmes likes the term "co-opetition" to describe how he interacts with area chambers, including the Roanoke Regional, which has a more global approach and focus on issues like state legislative changes. "The chambers are all cooperative. We know at some point we'll rub elbows going for the same business," he says. "You cooperate because that's what you do to support business."

Hobbies for Holmes include ball room dancing ("one of the reasons I moved back here"), mountain touring and building lamps out of salvaged material. "I think one of the things that I want people to know is I've chosen to be here. I feel like I was born here. I made a very conscious decision to be here," Holmes asserts. For more information on the Botetourt Chamber, visit [botetourtchamber.com](http://botetourtchamber.com) or call (540) 473-8280. 

## GLENN FELDMANN

GLENN FELDMANN DARBY & GOODLATTE



celebrating  
**65**  
years  
of service

37 Campbell Avenue, SW  
Roanoke, VA 24011  
540.224.8000  
[WWW.GLENNFELDMANN.COM](http://WWW.GLENNFELDMANN.COM)



A proud member of Meritas Law Firms Worldwide, Glenn Feldmann is proud to be affiliated with the premier network of prequalified independent law firms. For direct access, please visit the Meritas website at [www.meritas.org](http://www.meritas.org).




## How to find time for fitness >

Exhausted, overscheduled, eating-on-the-fly, sound familiar? As a society, we are very skilled at cramming our schedules to the brim so that there is little time for focusing on our health. It is essential that we find time in our hectic schedules for moving our bodies in some capacity as technology provides us more and more ways to move less and less. Gym memberships are not necessary—all it takes is a decent pair of comfortable athletic shoes and a few minutes every day.

Research has demonstrated that taking short breaks every hour or so to stand up and walk up and down a few stairs or around the block and return to work can actually improve performance at work as well as overall health. These “brain breaks” are enhanced when folks take their physical activity to the outdoors when the body is able to absorb a few minutes of Vitamin D from the most concentrated natural source (the sun) and switch your gaze from a computer screen to the distant outdoor horizon. Taking shorts breaks outside also aids in more restful sleep by allowing your body’s circadian rhythm to be influenced by natural versus artificial light.

Many workplaces are looking to encourage these brain breaks and other means of improving workers’ health because the numbers don’t lie: employees who spend more time engaging in activities like walking at work are less likely to call in sick or sustain on-the-job injuries. Similarly, some places of employment provide reimbursement for gym memberships, personal training, even supporting race registrations in efforts to encourage employees to focus more attention on healthy habits, which ultimately cost companies less and facilitate employment loyalty.

If your place of employment does not subsidize such healthy habits, there are ways to sneak in fitness throughout your day, which at the very least help alleviate stress and give your mind a break. While on the phone, stand up and engage your core, do some calf raises, sneak in a few squats. If you’re sitting at your desk, raise your arms above your head, hold the posture as you take a deep inhale and exhale through your nose, and slowly lower your hands back to resting position. Pull your belly button in toward your spine and rotate your hips forward—maintaining a neutral spine and forward-tilt of the pelvis helps engage core and postural muscles even while sitting.

Something is better than nothing when it comes to physical activity. Ten minutes before work, ten minutes at lunch, and ten minutes at home with the kids—done every day during the week and you hit the 150 minutes/week recommended for maintaining overall health. Your boss may thank you too, but your body will be forever grateful. 

*Ally Bowersock, Ph.D., CSCS, is the Co-Owner of RunAbout Sports Roanoke. Contact her: [runaboutroanoke@gmail.com](mailto:runaboutroanoke@gmail.com)*

## Wellness

**By Ally Bowersock**

### **Executive Summary:**

*The first column on corporate wellness from the Runabout Sports Roanoke co-owner and Associate Professor at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine*




## Fighting the root causes of poverty >

Imagine a family about to be evicted from their home, an entire household living in the dark and the cold because they can't afford to keep their utilities connected. They have little or no food to offer their hungry children, or worse, are unable to afford medications for their sick child. Now, think of these struggling families living only a few miles from your front door. This is the life that too many Americans have come to know and the number of people facing homelessness in our own community is on the rise.

Roanoke Valley families in crisis have been receiving emergency assistance from the Presbyterian Community Center for over 50 years. Last year alone, PCC distributed food and financial aid to over 2,889 households. It assisted over five thousand individuals, more than half of whom were children and senior citizens. PCC also provides an environment where children and young adults can be further educated, helping them become more successful members of the community. The organization's Pathways for Youth afterschool program boasts a 100% high school graduation rate over the last 10 years for students remaining in the program. Many of the students who completed the program are now college graduates, with some earning their Master's Degree.

The organization continues to strengthen its programs. In the fall of 2017, PCC Director of Programs Nicole Jennings and Pathways Coordinator Susan Frank attended classes in Louisville to become certified trainers in Bridges Out of Poverty and Getting Ahead, a companion program designed to help move individuals from poverty to self-sufficiency. Since that time, PCC has trained all of its employees and over 80 employees of other community nonprofits.

Working together as a community, Presbyterian Community Center has created a system that will ensure lasting change and help put an end to poverty in our hometown.

What really goes into a food order? The answer is simple: A lot of thoughtful planning; generous and timely donations; the labor of love by all volunteers and donors who are just as excited as PCC clients when the pantry shelves are stocked full. It is a winning combination for Southeast Roanoke. 



## Good Work

By Kaitlyn Van Buskirk

**Executive Summary:**  
*Fighting the good fight  
in Southeast Roanoke*



[www.cfwesternva.org](http://www.cfwesternva.org)

New name.

Same mission.

Strong as ever.

540.985.0204







**Tell Your Story, Announce Your News, Read Online and Share, Distribute to Customers, Advertise, Recognize Employees, Send Comments, Follow on Facebook, Sign Up for eBlast, Learn, Refer a Story or Source, Sponsor FRONT Events, Engage, Meet FRONTstaff, Enjoy**

**There are so many ways to be in FRONT**  
**Call or email us for more information**

**ads@vbFRONT.com | 540-389-9945 | vbFRONT.com**





**Aaron-Ray Dykstra**

## Old school, new school >

### **Executive Summary:**

*Maker Mart and the lost art of making things with your hands*

### **By Brian Bongard**

Aaron Ray-Dykstra said he was one of those kids who just wasn't inspired to study hard in school. But then he discovered that fixing things was fun. He would go on to educate himself in the trades, but did so in a way that would impress college engineering professors and surprised even him. As quoted in Afterschool Alliance,

Aaron said, "If you would have told me that at 13, I would be ravenously researching Martin-site crystallite structures in steel because it was endlessly fascinating to me, I would've laughed at you and skated off on my skateboard."

He would go on to serve his country in the Air Force working on fighter jets, then graduated from the Chicago School of Woodworking. He became a certified Bench Jeweler and a trained Blacksmith. After apprenticing with famed bicycle builder Koichi Yamaguchi, Ray-Dykstra came back to Roanoke and started Six Eleven Bicycle Company to build custom bikes for cyclists around the world from his shop on Shenandoah Avenue.

As the neighborhood kids passed by his shop, they would see the sparks



CONNECT & UNITE



DEVELOP & EDUCATE



ACCESS TO TALENT



**ROANOKE - BLACKSBURG  
TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL**  
CONNECT • GROW • LEAD

**Learn more & join: [www.rbtc.tech](http://www.rbtc.tech)**

flying through the open doors and stop by to watch. After a while, they started bringing in their broken bicycles, asking him if he could fix them. His answer was always, "No. But you can, and I'll help you do it".

And that was literally the spark of the idea for Maker Mart, now located at 1205 Patterson Avenue SW.

At Maker Mart the goal is to empower young people. Start with an idea; make a plan, then execute the plan by building something. It gives the kids a sense of purpose, accomplishment and pride says Ray-Dykstra.

The kids who were coming by were mostly, like Aaron, not fitting well into the traditional school system. Frequently

coming from challenging home situations, they were not very likely to go to college. However, with guidance and a "hands on" approach to teaching, he found many had a passion for learning just waiting to be released.

"As a society, we have a habit of trying to correct what students are bad at, instead of focusing on what they're good at," adds Ray-Dykstra. "If you try to push kids, they will push back. If you treat kids like human beings and just try to help them, you will see what they are capable of." At Maker Mart, they learn skills that can help make a good living. Local industries are desperate for workers skilled in trades like woodworking and welding, as Baby Boomer employees reach retirement age. It's an employment crisis often referred to as the "Silver Tsunami."

## discover the college *inspired* by its mission

At VCOM, we are inspired to bring physicians to rural and medically underserved areas of southwest Virginia and the Appalachian region.

Our medical school based in Blacksburg, Virginia, trains students who are inspired to bring care to those most in need.

Visit us online to find out how you will be *inspired...*

**www.vcom.edu**



Edward Via College of  
Osteopathic Medicine

**VIRGINIA**

For a copy of our Outcomes Reports, please see [www.vcom.edu/outcomes](http://www.vcom.edu/outcomes). ©2019 Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine. All rights reserved. VCOM is certified by the State Council of Higher Education to operate in Virginia.





Marie Tulou with her bookcase

Ray-Dykstra and his wife London started bringing in “Makers” from the community to work with the kids. One of those is Tree Fairfax, who upcycles old leather goods into handmade purses. She started small,

working a full-time job while making the purses in the evening. Her goal was to grow her business to the point that she could quit her day job by the end of the last year. She reached that goal by Thanksgiving, made

**THERE'S HOPE FOR EVERY DOG!**

Private Lessons 🐾 Group Classes

Roanoke's Award-Winning  
Dog Training Company

[www.high-hopes.net](http://www.high-hopes.net)



**HIGH  
HOPES**  
DOG TRAINING

540.343.3849






Maker Mart

the leap, and hasn't looked back since.

Recently they worked with Chip White, Regional Director for the Boy Scouts, becoming a location where scouts could earn Woodworking Merit badges. Maker Mart now offers adult night classes that help support the youth day programs. A "Parents Night Out" on Fridays gives kids a taste of the program along with some pizza, so Mom and Dad can have time for a date night. They are looking for more Makers to come in and connect with the kids—and community partners

that can provide the supplies or funding.

Longer term, they would like to find satellite locations for specialty classes. Maybe an old gas station for welding, or a place to explore digital technologies like website construction or film. They would also be glad to partner with anyone who would like to bring a program like Maker Mart to their community. As Aaron Ray-Dykstra likes to tell the kids, "your hands are a fast track to entrepreneurship." 

See: [makingfoundation.org](http://makingfoundation.org).  
email [info@makingfoundation.org](mailto:info@makingfoundation.org)

## THE SMALL BUSINESS PLAN<sup>SM</sup>

Dependable Legal Counsel for Your Small Business

*No "billable hours." Just a simple flat rate.*

Perhaps it's happened to you — a small business owner calls a lawyer to ask a simple question, then unexpectedly receives a huge bill a few weeks later. After an experience like that, it's hard to pick up the phone the next time you have a legal question.

We want you to come to us with your problems and questions as soon as they arise, rather than allowing a problem to fester and grow into a legal disaster. That's why we've developed The Small Business Plan. So you can feel free to call us any time, and ask any question you want about your small business, without fear of excessive and unexpected legal bills.



THE  
**CREEKMORE**  
[www.creekmorelaw.com](http://www.creekmorelaw.com) LAW FIRM PC

540-443-9350 EXT 3



## On Tap from the Pub

By Tom Field

**Executive Summary:**  
*Our publisher was prompted to expound from another columnist's contribution in this edition.*

### A numbers game >

Five out of four students in Virginia don't have a good understanding of math.

Boy, did Mike Leigh's column this issue hit the mark for me. (See Page 24.) He reminds us how easily it is to misinterpret, misuse, or even intentionally mislead with numbers. Math is math, right? Numbers are right or wrong, there is no middle ground. So our tendency then, is to simply believe the information shared is correct when it is substantiated with numbers. In your business or organization, Mike warns, you better step back and check out that whole equation. Coming from an analytical type like Mike, who cherishes numbers like the hefty kid directly under the busted piñata, we indeed should cross-check, double-check, verify and substantiate our data.

Out of the organizational planning realm, I'm not fond of misusing numbers in our media, advertising, communications, reporting, even our advocacy activities, either. You'd think I could just ignore what I perceive to be false information, because it's all around us. But I can't. Not even when numbers are used to support the causes I believe in.

And though PT Barnum (or is it WC Fields?) is credited with saying "you can't cheat an honest man," it's not just the gullible who blindly accept positions supported with figures and statistics. People direct their money, their votes, their time, their very hearts to all sorts of causes and missions based on numerical interpretations.

I'm no crusader for better decision-making. For example, I'm probably in the minority on the subject of voting attendance. Although I'd like for more eligible voters to participate in our superior democratic system, taking full advantage of the rights and liberties we have to elect our representatives and be engaged in our politics, I actually don't mind the apathetic staying away from the polls. If you don't care, I'm not so sure I want you involved in shaping our government.

So it's not the people who might fall for biased information I'm worried about. I just have great difficulty tolerating those who use whatever numbers they can find to advance their agenda with blatant disregard to the whole truth.

Here's a minor example in my own industry. Media kits will report a magazine distributes 100,000 copies. That's nice, but what does that mean if you walk around town and see stacks of back issues still sitting in the racks? Wouldn't a decision-maker be better served if he knew the consumption number instead?

A popular charity (which I support and give a great deal of time and money to) used to post a claim that one in five children in

continued on Page 41

## Second chapters >

Within the past few months a long time Roanoke County department head and the highly visible Executive Director for United Way of Roanoke Valley have moved on and found new mountains to climb. Not everybody has that luxury of course, but Anne Marie Green was able to retire one day from the county after 30 years and a day later she was President of the Council of Community Services, succeeding Dan Merenda.

Earlier that same month (July) Afira DeVries said goodbye to United Way after landing here from United Way in Tampa four years ago. She has moved on to become the U.S. director for a London-based non-profit, Spring Impact, where she says some of the lessons learned in 22 years with United Way can be employed on a macro basis – “scalable” social projects she calls it—to help more people worldwide. DeVries expects to do plenty of traveling and may relocate to the West Coast. “Helping to reach more people in more places,” she says.

Green was General Services director and Human Resources director among the hats she wore for Roanoke County. With the Council of Community Services she will soon help launch the needle exchange program in Roanoke City for those battling opioid addiction – “that was slightly controversial,” she notes. The Council also operates the statewide 2-1-1 phone referral line, a social agency resource center.

She also wants to spread the word in general about Council services (like HIV testing), to “raise the profile,” relying in part on her early Roanoke County days as public information officer. The CCS also helps train other non-profits and is one of the agencies in Roanoke battling the homeless issue. “It was time to move on to a new challenge,” says Green, “it’s a natural step from government to nonprofit. Local government impacts people’s lives and this is just an extension of that.”

DeVries says she was able to lead scalable projects at the local United Way level in Roanoke, working with other social service agencies to leverage that impact, asking them to create what she calls “multigenerational strategies. Now I’ll be able to do that work globally. The Roanoke Valley has so much to be proud of in terms of social work.” She says it is more of a calling than a profession, something she can’t fully explain.

As corporate entities become more sophisticated with their philanthropy DeVries also says nonprofits these days have to work harder to make sure donations are being spent more effectively. “The incoming generation of [business] leaders wants to know that they are getting a return on their investment – the same way they do when they make an investment in their stock portfolio.”

Her advice for those longing for a fresh challenge, and new

continued on Page 41



Gene Marrano

## There’s something happening here

By Gene Marrano

**Executive Summary:**  
*New challenges for familiar faces in the Roanoke Valley.*



# CONTRIBUTORS

**Brian Bongard** is a writer, real estate investor, adventure seeker, and aspiring musician who loves calling Roanoke home base. [btbongard@gmail.com]

**Ally Bowersock**, PhD, is the co-owner of Runabout Sports and several other businesses with her husband and fellow fitness fanatic Tyler. She is also an Associate Professor at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and consults with local companies on employee wellness. [runaboutroanoke@gmail.com]

**Bruce C. Bryan** is proprietor of the award-winning advertising and marketing agency, B2C Enterprises, located in downtown Roanoke. [bruce@b2centerprises.com]

**Dan Dowdy** is the business development director for Valley Business FRONT and owner of The Proofing Prof proofreading services (www.proofingprof.com). His background includes service in the U.S. Air Force and an extensive career in education, including teaching college-level writing competency and business courses, and working for a Fortune 100 company. [ddowdy@vbFRONT.com]

**Tom Field** is a creative director, marketing executive and owner of Berryfield, Inc. in Salem, and owner of Valley Business FRONT magazine. He has written and produced programs and materials for local and international organizations for more than 30 years. [tfield@berryfield.com]

**Mike Leigh** is president of OpX Solutions, LLC, a performance improvement company that helps organizations pursue operational excellence. A retired naval commander and former GE manufacturing manager, he has extensive experience in leadership development and process improvement. [Mike@OpXSolutionsLLC.com]

Waking up with the peaceful sound of bird chatter while watching the sun rise over the mountains is one of **Nanette Levin's** simple pleasures. Still considered a foreigner by some local residents (she moved to Roanoke at the end of 2015), Nanette's determined to illuminate local treasures for business and pleasure through her company, Roanoke Revealed. When she's not enjoying nature and writing or creating marketing strategies for clients, she's growing fresh vegetables & herbs, seeing the sights in the area and occasionally

hopping on a horse. [nlevin@fulcrumny.com]

**Gene Marrano** is FRONT interim editor and an award-winning anchor and reporter for WFIR Newstalk radio. He recently won best feature award from the Virginia Association of Broadcasters for his Dopesick interview with Beth Macy. [gmarrano@cox.net]

**Ian Price** is a radio and print journalist in Roanoke who looks at things through a Millennial's eye. The Radford University communications major is also a pretty good DJ and trivia host some say. [langprice23@mail.com]

**Maggie Rotanz** and **Spencer Pugh** were born and raised in Salem, VA. Maggie graduated from Ohio University with a degree in Photojournalism in 2016 and Spencer graduated from Virginia Tech in 2015 with a degree in Communication Studies. Upon exploring similar career paths, Maggie and Spencer decided to team up to start Harvest Digital Marketing to help local businesses turn online followers into paying and loyal customers. [hello@harvestdigitalmarketing.co]

**Michael Shelton** specializes in working with Roanoke and Lynchburg area residents

age 55+ who want to ensure they won't run out of money before they die. He currently holds his Series 6, 63 & 65 licenses and received the prestigious Chartered Financial Retirement Counselor designation. He's an Iraqi Freedom War Veteran. As owner of both 360 Tax Solutions and 360 Financial Solutions, he takes client satisfaction seriously and makes himself available to every client and prospect of his firms. Tune into Fox radio for his weekly Small Business Figures show. [michael@discover360Financial.com]

**Nicholas Vaassen** is a graphic designer with 18 years experience, specializing in publications. His design projects include FRONT, lifestyle, real estate, municipal, classified sales and cultural organization magazines in Roanoke and southwestern Virginia markets. [nvaassen@berryfield.com]

**Kaitlyn Van Buskirk** is a grants associate with Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia. Her experience includes development, planned giving, philanthropy, and fundraising roles with nonprofits and community service organizations, and she has a BA from Sweet Briar College focused in business, management, marketing, and related support services. [kaitlyn@cfwesternva.org]



Valley Business Front would like to get your tips and suggestions.

Use the  
FREE App

Suggestion  
MailBox®

Submit  
your ideas

Download the app at [SuggestionMailBox.com](http://SuggestionMailBox.com) or from




Call us at 855.6.Suggest or visit [suggestionmailbox.com](http://suggestionmailbox.com)

## Marrano / There's something

from Page 39

mountains to climb? "Don't wait for a sign; listen to what's going on inside of you. I have loved my time [with United Way] but I think the greatest mistake we make is ignoring

what's being said to us from inside. My heart is telling me to go out into the world and see what I can do." Not everyone has the ability to change horses in midstream like Anne Marie Green or Afira DeVries but here's wishing them the best. 

## Field / On Tap

from Page 38

America was struggling with hunger. That's simply not true. I just looked and noticed the organization has changed that claim to one in eight (so perhaps someone called them out on it). The thing is, you can dig around enough to substantiate your information, and even justify your proclamations in the interest of advocacy; but it's just false to say twenty percent of American children are starving. We often don't call out claims like this, because doing so makes us appear uncaring. But we don't need to exaggerate our claims to push our agenda.

At this time of year, another worthy cause likes to report how well it serves our young ones in high school. "We've saved over 85,000 lives," the organization says in its promotional communications. Sure enough, it's a great program, running now more than three decades; and in just this year alone, more than 5,000 students at 40 high schools will attend the After Prom event. "Keeping 85,000 students safe," would seem more appropriate to say, since it would be ludicrous to assume all of those kids are going to drink and drive or do opioids or put themselves in the path of drunk drivers and other dangers. Indeed, prom night is "one of the most dangerous nights of their young lives," statistically speaking, but providing that safe environment is praiseworthy without the enhanced rhetoric.

Do you see how ugly and crabby and unsympathetic I come across when I point out these nuances, which are rather inconsequential in the end, right? If the words produce just one more dollar to feed the children—or cause just one more student to attend After Prom, I should shut up and give these honorable organizations a pass, yes?

No. Sorry.

If anything, we should hold the organizations we consider honorable to even higher standards. If our favorite causes can play loose with numbers, we can hardly point fingers at the ones that stand against our beliefs.

It's exactly this manipulation of numbers that blocks progress. Depending on whose statistics you trust, racism, for example, is either on the increase, on the decline, or basically unchanged in our history. The riots under Obama marked a spike in tensions or the tweets from Trump divided the country more. Maybe both. From domestic shootings to international military intervention (civilian and military casualties from our own drone strikes are virtually ignored and under-reported), we are relying on numbers that may or may not be informing us the way we think they are.

No one is using numbers to advance their cause better than our political parties. But it's also not just the postulations from our current candidates. Look, listen, and read folks from Milton Freidman to Robert Reich. John Stossel to Rachel Maddow. PragerU to Southern Poverty Law Center. ACLU to ACLJ. These voices are almost always completely opposite from one another, and yet they're addressing the identical issues, completely substantiated with the most convincing numbers. As a philosophy professor once told me, they can't both be right.

Could all this data manipulation play a role in our ability to even unite as a society?

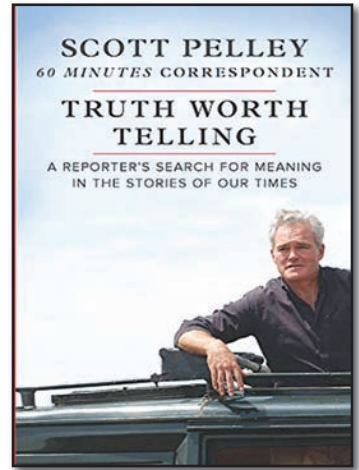
Yes. And it can all be summed up in one word that describes a product we've become masters at building and distributing:

Propaganda.

9.9 people out of 10 are not immune to it. 

## 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](mailto:news@vbFRONT.com)



### *Veteran reporter dishes*

You can almost hear veteran CBS reporter and 60 Minutes correspondent Scott Pelley's voice as he strolls down memory lane, recalling stories from his long career, which included a 6 year stint as the CBS Evening News anchor. From the opening chapter of *Truth Worth Telling: A Reporter's Search for Meaning in the Stories of Our Times*, (Hanover Square Press, 2019), from the morning of the 9/11 attack in New York – he was there – to Bruce Springsteen and several chapters on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, to Presidents Clinton, Bush (G.W.) and a less than generous spin on Donald Trump, Pelley's book has a lyrical quality.

Business connection? A long detailed chapter centered around a rare 60 Minutes interview with then-Fed bank chairman Ben Bernanke that goes into great detail on the roots of the 2008 Recession, and one on Elon Musk, the visionary large-scale entrepreneur not afraid to take a risk here and there.

—Gene Marrano

### *"The West" you say?*

In the late 1700's just after the American Revolution, hardy bands of settlers starting leaving Massachusetts for the wilds of ... Ohio? It was called the Northwest Territory, a landmass deeded to the fledgling United States by Great Britain as part of the Treaty of Paris. The "Northwest Territory" wasn't the future Oregon or Washington State – it was Ohio and what became several other Midwest states, starting just across the Ohio River from what was then

Virginia (later West Virginia.) Two-time Pulitzer Prize winner David McCullough (he's written *Truman*, *John Adams*, *The Wright Brothers*, et al) tells all about those early Ohio settlers in *The Pioneers: The Heroic Story of the Settlers Who Brought the American Ideal West*, (Simon & Schuster, 2019).

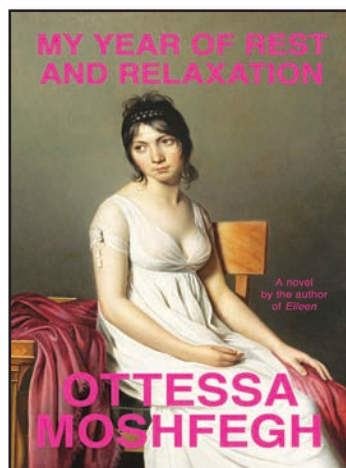
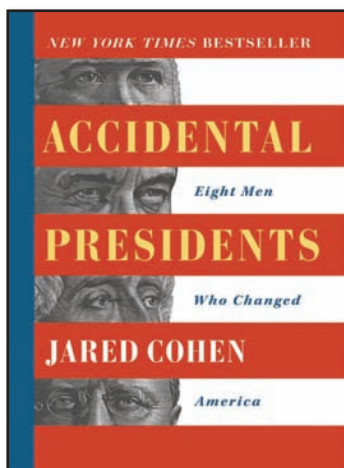
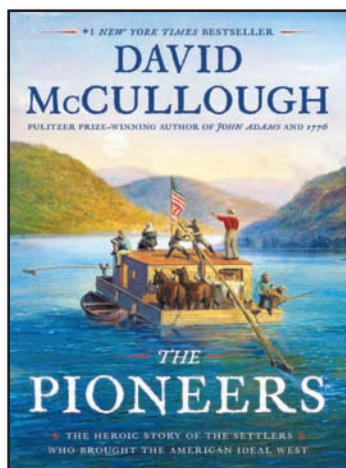
Sort of like with Scott Pelley's book, some may hear McCullough's voice in his writing, the voice we all became so familiar with when he narrated Ken Burns' *The Civil War* PBS series. The perseverance detailed is a lesson about goal setting and forging on despite obstacles like disease, famine, hostile native tribes and dense, first-growth forests that had to be hacked through to establish roads and then the town of Marietta on the banks of the Ohio River. American history buffs will find this shorter McCullough read (258 pages) well worth the time – a slice of our history that probably is little known to many.

—Gene Marrano

### *When you fall into the top job*

They weren't elected, but each became Chief Executive of the country, for better or worse. *Accidental Presidents: Eight Men Who Changed America* by Jared Cohen (Simon and Schuster, 2019), details the 8 presidents who assumed that office due to the death of their predecessors. Many former Veeps were inconsequential; a few were disasters for the country (e.g. Andrew Johnson rolling back rights for southern blacks after Abraham Lincoln was assassinated) and





several rose mightily to the occasion at times. Witness Harry Truman and Lyndon Johnson, who made Civil Rights gains before questionable foreign conflicts (Korea, Vietnam) tarnished their legacies. And of course VP Theodore Roosevelt became larger than life after William McKinley was fatally shot in Buffalo.

What's interesting is that at least on the surface, many of these eight men professed to not wanting the top spot, at least not because murder or illness had killed the President. Many too were unprepared and felt shut out of the decision making process beforehand. A lesson there for CEOs and company presidents perhaps. It's also interesting in that the rules regarding succession from the Vice-Presidency to the Oval Office weren't fully defined until the 1960's. Another warning perhaps for top company executives—have a plan in place.

—Gene Marrano

## Zombies are real

Well, first, look at that cover. What would you expect from a novel with such a classical pose? Coupled with the bright pink back cover, I had to present quite the unexpected sight as an old white dude reading this on the beach this summer.

I consider myself rather open minded (my daughters may contest that) and quite tolerant—with a few exceptions. Unsuitable parents (in many cases, I should be more forgiving here, I suppose), and of course, violent, hateful sorts get little understanding

from me. But there's another category I claim to be apathetic or ambivalent towards, because it consists of individuals who make little difference to my daily life (at least in my psyche, I'm not so tolerant if I were truthful). It's the self-destructive type. If you want to waste your life away, what does it matter to me... just don't position your pathetic perspective anywhere near my path, right? The last thing I need is that degree of self-imposed negativity.

Ottessa Moshfegh's *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* (Penguin; 2018) may be strong enough to cause me to pause and rethink... just a bit, at least. I still don't find our deeply compelling narrator sympathetic. Hardships (loss of parents) give credence to some victimhood status; but I know too many folks of all ages (and not just strong ones) who overcome tragedy without self-imploding. This novel, however, reminds me to consider the incredible absorption of prescription drugs into our modern society, and how many "zombies" are walking amongst us. The role our quacky doctors and mental healthcare systems play in erecting hedges against true compassion cannot be denied. Our girl here—is ugly and beautiful. I confess: I'm only going to see the first half of that equation when I encounter her in real life in most instances. I'm thankful this reading reminded me that the girl I see—is not always who she is.

—Tom Field

The reviewers: **Gene Marrano** is a news journalist and interim editor of FRONT; **Tom Field** is a creative director and publisher.



## Clever name >

In the mix of recent uptick of development in downtown Salem, **The Sharp Flats** apartment complex is a renovation of the former Ridenhour Music Shop, now all part of a complex that includes the recently opened West Salem Barbecue and El Jefe Taqueria restaurants.



## Coffee and construction >

A **Holiday Inn Express & Suites** will soon arrive at Roanoke's major eastside city intersection of Williamson Road and Orange Avenue, sharing the parking lot of a relatively new Starbucks, and developed by Star City Lodging.





## A new restaurant blooms in Wasena >

**Bloom Restaurant & Wine Bar** has opened on Main Street in Roanoke's Wasena neighborhood. Owner Nate Sloan reported brisk business at a ribbon cutting in late July. It's the latest redevelopment for Garland Properties, which also owns the renovated building across the street housing RND Coffee.



## New Northwest Library >

The last of Roanoke City's public library branches to be upgraded was the **Melrose Library**, which relocated to a space more than twice as large on the Goodwill Industries of the Valleys jobs campus on Melrose Avenue NW. The four million dollar project includes updated technology, computer stations and community meeting rooms. Library officials hope to create synergy with Goodwill job training programs available next door.



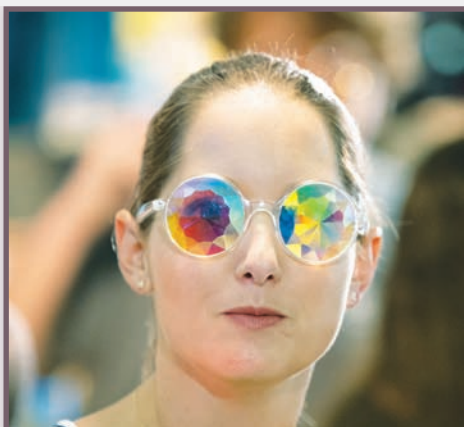


## FloydFest by the numbers >

Valley Business FRONT newsroom staff attended FloydFest 19 “Voyage Home” July 24–28, 2019 by Across-the-Way Productions. Some stats we dug up on the mountain include the following:

- #1 “Best Music Festival in North America” by FlightNetwork; May 2018 (and ranked first or in the top of many other reports)
- 19 years running
- 14,000+ total attendance
- 9 Stages
- 89 acre site (off Blue Ridge Parkway, Patrick County, VA) + 100 off site
- 14,000+ total attendance
- 100 bands (1,200 to date)
- 100+ official sponsor partners
- 140+ vendors
- 400+ staff
- 600+ volunteers
- 40 hours to mow the site
- 20 tons of recycling collected during festival
- 200 portable restrooms

FloydFest was a complete sellout in late July for what is called a “boutique festival.” Ideal weather, recent Grammy winners Brandi Carlile and Kacey Musgraves, plus a strong contingent of regional groups in a variety of musical genres helped make FloydFest 19 a homerun. FloydFest CEO John McBroom called it “one of the nicest forecasts we’ve ever had.” McBroom also played with his Blue Mule and GOTE groups. “I love the lineup this year,” he said during the festival, “this is one of the funnest places to be ever.”

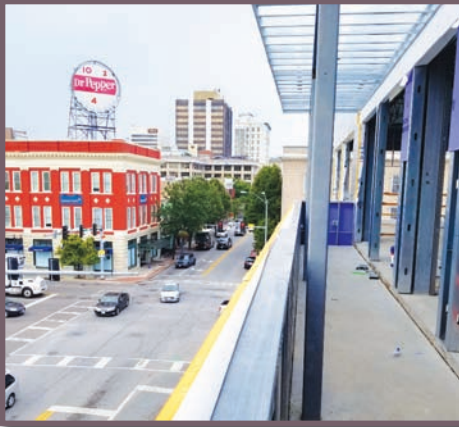


# FRONT 'N ABOUT



PHOTOS by Juan Jaramillo;  
Latitude 4 Photography  
<https://juanjaramillo.smugmug.com>  
[facebook.com/photojuan1/](https://facebook.com/photojuan1/)  
540-798-4479





## Newest landmark coming >

Rising up out of a former parking lot at the popular Williamson Road–Campbell Avenue intersection, **Pinnacle Financial Partners** erects downtown Roanoke's newest prominent commercial building (non-residential) since the NS building over two decades ago. Pinnacle's middle market manager **Jonathan Richardson** and regional president **David Allen** show the facility mid-construction, which is expected to be ready by the first of the new year. Highlighting its "gateway" position, Allen says the building will incorporate some industrial design elements (bronze framing on smoked glass) to celebrate Roanoke's rail heritage while providing a contemporary open environment for employees and customers. Looking out from all four sides of the three-story building, viewers will see the City's most prominent landmarks (including East End railyard shops, Mill Mountain Star, Dr Pepper/H&C Coffee neon signs, Taubman Museum).







## Are you going to Tri it? >

The **Ironman Group** joined **Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge**, local elected officials, title sponsor Carilion executives, recreation enthusiasts and others to announce that the Carilion Clinic Ironman 70.3 triathlon is coming to the valley next June 7. That's a 1.2 mile swim at Carvins Cove, 56 bike ride in the rolling hills of Botetourt County and a half marathon on foot through several localities – in that order with no break. It's being hailed as a major economic boon for the area and is expected to draw several thousand entrants. The Ironman 70.3 was lured away from Williamsburg for what was called a multiyear commitment. The lowest price registration tiers were snapped up in just days after the August 13 registration launch date.



## New owners for former Cox building >

**VFP**, which manufactures customized enclosures for telecommunication and digital systems in far southwest Virginia, celebrated its purchase and remodeling of the former Cox Communications customer service center on Fallowater Drive in SW Roanoke County recently. It serves as the VFP corporate office. Cox Communications remains in part of the building, leasing office space. Roanoke County Board of Supervisors chairman Phil North called it a good example of repurposing an existing structure – that he said fits in with the Reimagine 419 Town Center Plan being crafted for that corridor.



Ian Price

## A treat for your feet >

The **Salt Foot Sanctuary/Spa and Adventure Center** at Hotel Roanoke had not held a ribbon cutting after opening in February – so they rectified that last month. Owner Larry Landolt (who also operates Tour Roanoke with wife Mary McCarty) says there’s nothing else like it in the valley: relaxing foot soaks in bath salts, with a glass of beer or wine available, massages etc.



## Botetourt County welcomes Sheetz >

There’s a new **Sheetz** convenience store and fuel station on US 220 at Catawba Road in Botetourt County. There had been some resident opposition to the development, fearing a traffic issue, but both Louie Sheetz (from the founding family in PA) and county officials expressed optimism at an early August ribbon cutting that Sheetz – almost 600 locations strong at this point – would be a good neighbor. They got off on the right foot by handing over \$2500 checks to Feeding America-Southwest Virginia, Special Olympics and several other local non-profits.





## New chopper pad >

**LewisGale Medical Center** in Salem has a new home for the helipad used by various airlift services for patient transport: its roof. The old helipad (from 1972) was located about 100 yards from the building and meant patients had to be loaded into an ambulance and then unloaded again in the ER. The new, 3 million dollar rooftop landing site for rescue helicopters includes a three-story elevator shaft that accesses the emergency and operating rooms.



## Chamber hoedown >

The Salem-Roanoke County Chamber of Commerce held its 3rd annual **Kegs & Barrels** beer/wine tasting mixer in early August at Green Hill Park. More than a dozen area beer brewers and wine makers took part. It was the first Kegs & Barrels under new Chamber executive director Michelle Darby, profiled in this issue as well.



# FRONT'N ABOUT



## Salsa on the mountain >

**Bent Mountain Salsa**, founded several years ago by two Air Force veterans, is branching out with more local distribution to retail outlets like the Roanoke Co+op. They call their products "California Style Salsa made on Top of the Mountain." The popular and recently opened El Jefe Taqueria in Salem serves the salsas made locally by Marlon Major (left in photo) and Chris Graham. They currently employ the LEAP kitchen in West End Village to blend their mild-to-spicy products.



## New Ventures >

**Robin Ferguson** said she "had this dream for 35 years." Now's she's opened The Knittin' Coop on South College Avenue in Salem, where she supplies yarn, patterns and everything else a knitter might need. Ferguson (pictured at left with daughter/sometimes employee Julia Mooney) wants to support Virginia suppliers of yarn and "indie dyers." Meanwhile Roanoke County resident **David Arthur** has written a children's book-based on a tale he used to tell his daughter. *Princess Bella Squirrel Saves the Fairies* is available online and at some local book stores. From Page Publishing. (send us a photo of your new venture to [news@vbfront.com](mailto:news@vbfront.com))

Valley Business FRONT is FRONT'n About at many events each month.  
Check the social media links at [www.vbFRONT.com](http://www.vbFRONT.com) for more coverage.

# FRONT NETWORK



**Christine A. Smith, CDFA®**  
Financial Advisor  
**Smith & Associates**  
A financial advisory practice of  
Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc.  
**540.443.9143 & 540.777.6764**  
christine.a.smith@ampf.com  
CA Insurance #0F69689

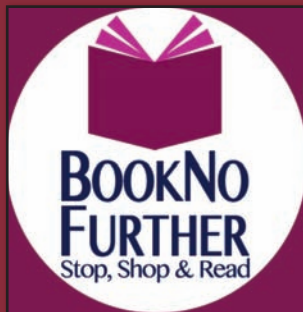
**Ameriprise**  
Financial

Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc. Member FINRA and SIPC.



**BERRYFIELD**  
MARKETING & MEDIA  
do tell.

**TOM FIELD**  
PRESIDENT  
PO BOX 1041  
SALEM VA 24153  
**540 389 9945**  
540 798 9945 (M)  
TFIELD@BERRYFIELD.COM  
BERRYFIELD.COM



New and Like-New Books  
112 Market Street SE  
Roanoke, VA 24011  
Downtown Roanoke  
**540-206-2505**  
www.booknofurther.com

COMING SOON!  
Heart Wood Tree Salvage



**Brown Hound**  
Tree Service

We have the  
**PEOPLE**  
**SKILLS**  
EXPERIENCE  
EQUIPMENT  
REPUTATION  
to take care of your property

**540-525-9787**  
brownhoundtreeservice.com



**Senior Moving Services**

Moving~Consignment~Auctions~Real Estate

6704 Williamson Road NW  
Roanoke VA 24019

**540-982-5800**

www.crowningtouchusa.com



**Electrical Excellence**

~ Since 1946 ~

www.davishelliot.com  
(800) 755-6702

**Davis H. Elliot Company, Inc.**  
Full Service Electrical Contractor



**Chris Himmel**  
Air Quality Specialist

1201 Franklin Rd  
Roanoke, VA 24016

Call/Text 540-797-0224  
Office 540-339-3212

*We Make Air Better!*

Chris.Himmel@greenhomesolutions.com  
www.GreenHomeSolutions.com/Roanoke

Residential • Commerical • Real Estate • Medical

*The* **Proofing Prof**  
*Helping you Write it Right*

**Dan Dowdy**

phone: 540.797.7943

email: proofingprof@gmail.com

www.proofingprof.com

**Put your Business Card  
in the FRONT for only \$149!**

**Email ads@vbFRONT.com or call 540-389-9945**

# Career FRONT

## FINANCIAL FRONT



**Hildebrand**

Freedom First Credit Union has promoted **Steve Hildebrand** to Senior Vice President of Marketing. He had served as Vice President of Marketing at Freedom First since 2014.

**Will Fralin** has joined Roanoke-based Dominion Risk Advisors as an Insurance and Risk Advisor. Fralin will work with commerce and private clients. The UVA graduate has been in the industry for almost 2 years.

## WELLNESS FRONT

**Pete Larkin** has joined



**Larkin**

Carilion Clinic as a senior consultant in public affairs. He was formerly Chief of Staff for retired 6th District Congressman Bob Goodlatte.



**Holland**

**Tiffany Holland** is now a corporate communications specialist for Carilion Clinic. She was formerly a Roanoke Times reporter.

The Community Health Center of the New River Valley welcomes **Pete Guerra**, MD to



**Guerra**

its staff. Guerra will provide primary care services at the Montgomery Center in Christiansburg.



**Pierce**

Vistar Eye Center has announced **Herbert "Herby" Pierce** as its new chief executive officer. He replaces former CEO Paul Levy, who retired in May.

**Dr. Robert Benjamin Swanson**, MD, FACS has joined Jefferson Surgical. Swanson has experience with both



**Swanson**

vascular and general surgery. His background includes experience as a Mobile Field Surgical Team Leader for the United States Air Force.



**Clark**

Richfield Living has announced the selection of **Sue Ellen Clark** as Administrator of the Joseph C. Thomas Center. Clark comes to the rehabilitation and senior living company with a background as a Licensed Nursing Home and Certified Dementia Practitioner Administrator.



# LIFETIME

**No hidden fees.  
Giving you peace of mind.**



## EDUCATION FRONT



Acito

**Andrew Acito** has been appointed assistant professor in the Dept. of Accounting and Information Systems at Virginia Tech's Pamplin College of Business. He is one of five new full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty members at Pamplin this fall.



Ramos

**Mauricio "Reese" Ramos** is the first director of the newly created University

Ombuds Office at Virginia Tech. It is described as "another avenue for faculty, staff, students, and others to express concerns, ask questions, and receive guidance in interactions with the university and other individuals."



Hoover

**Samantha Hoover** has joined the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine as director of Alumni Relations. Most recently she served as alumnae and donor communications coordinator at Hollins University.



Luke

**Timothy Luke**, a University Distinguished Professor at Virginia Tech returns as the chair of the Department of Political Science for the fourth time since joining the faculty in 1981.



Roediger

**Emily Roediger** has been named director of

communications for the College of Architecture and Urban Studies at Virginia Tech. She had previously been with the Department of Biomedical Engineering and Mechanics at Tech.



Heaslip

**Kevin Heaslip**, an associate professor of civil and environmental engineering in the College of Engineering at Virginia Tech, was named the CACI Faculty Fellow by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors. The CACI Faculty Fellowship to attract and retain

## *Have a career announcement?*

Send announcements to [news@vbFRONT.com](mailto: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.

# FREE CHECKING



## Carter Bank & Trust

[CarterBankandTrust.com/Locations](http://CarterBankandTrust.com/Locations)

## Career FRONT

leading scholars in the College of Engineering. Heaslip has been a member of the Virginia Tech faculty since 2014



Rogers

**Nadia A. Rogers**, Virginia Tech associate professor of practice in the Department of Accounting and Information at the Pamplin College of Business, has been appointed by Governor Ralph Northam to serve on the Virginia Board of Accountancy as the educator member of the seven-member board, which regulates certified public accountants in Virginia and provides consumer protection. Before joining Virginia Tech in 2015, Rogers worked in public accounting.

**Brent Shadle** has been named Chair of the History Department at



Shadle

Virginia Tech. Shadle has been a professor for the Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical and Cultural Thought since 2005 and will continue as a faculty advisor for a student organization, the Coalition for Refugee Resettlement, which volunteers at two Roanoke high schools and a middle school.

**Christopher Flynn** has been appointed executive director of Mental Health Initiatives at Virginia Tech. Flynn will be tasked with implementing action items recommended by a task force convened last year to address mental health services on the Blacksburg campus. Flynn had been director of the Cook Counseling Center since 2006.

## NON-PROFIT FRONT



Cobbs

**Cheryl Cobbs** is now Feeding America Southwest Virginia's Community Solutions Center director. Cobb, a northwest Roanoke City native, succeeds Rick Morrison, a former Roanoke City police officer who helped establish the CSC - a training ground for culinary students and a commercial kitchen that prepares meals for low-income children and seniors.

Local Colors of Western VA has appointed a new



Spencer

executive director to succeed Beth Lutjen, who retired this summer from the Roanoke non-profit that celebrates the valley's multicultural diversity via the annual Local Colors Festival in May and continuing outreach programs. **Lisa Spencer** comes from Dallas with 25 years of non-profit experience in human services and community development, most recently with Volunteers of America Texas.

*Compiled by  
Gene Marrano*

“Something is better than nothing when it comes to physical activity — Page 30



## A Mission of Quality Service, Excellent Support and Advanced Technology

Citizens began with a vision, a need for communications in rural America. From the front steps of the Floyd County Court House evolved what would become Citizens Telephone Cooperative. From that February day in 1914 to today, the mission to provide quality service, excellent support, and advanced technology remains steadfast.

Today, with just over 60 employees, Citizens continues to be a leading-edge technology provider offering services that complement its core services of voice, video, and data. Citizens has grown from a local telephone company to the technology company of the future. With full-service offerings for residential, small and global businesses, Citizens brings it all together for you.

Citizens lets you Bundle **YOUR** Way! Get the best prices on the most reliable services for your home and business.



DCJS #11-9804





**PARK**  
AT THE BRIDGES



# FLASHBACK FRIDAYS

AMAZING TRIBUTE BAND CONCERTS  
YOUR FAVORITE OUTDOOR CONCERT VENUE



SEPTEMBER 13TH - TOM PETTY TRIBUTE



OCTOBER 11TH - KISS TRIBUTE



**SEPT  
27TH**  
ERIC WAYNE DUO



**YOUR #1 DESTINATION FOR OUTDOOR EVENTS**  
**INFO & TICKETS : DRPEPPERPARK.COM**

**Dr Pepper Park at the Bridges**

9 Old Whitmore Ave. Roanoke, VA  
(540) 204-2414 info@drpepperpark.com

<https://drpepperpark.com>



## *Rocket fuel for growth*

A GoVirginia Region 2 grant will enable the **Advancement Foundation's Innovation Mill** – designed for “scalable businesses” to help 5 companies per quarter validate the “proof of concept.” Entrepreneurs will be guided through 6 stages while at the Innovation Mill in Vinton.

## *Urgent Care Expansion*

**Carilion** has opened its newest Velocity Care urgent care location in Raphine. The facility sits on the campus of White's Travel Center.

## *TAP in bookselling business*

**Total Action for Progress** has launched a new fundraising arm that also helps build business skills for those involved in its operation. TAP Books is being called a “social entrepreneurship” effort that is already raising money for TAP programs.

## *Black Dog Salvage in the music biz*

**Black Dog Salvage** – home of those zany Salvage Dawgs as seen on TV's DIY Network – are also getting into the live venue music business with three monthly concerts through October at what they call The Dog Bowl, a new stage set up on their own Black Dog Salvage property. Craft beer and wine, and food trucks will be on site. Proceeds go to non-profits

supported by First Fridays, which is partnering on the project.

## *College facelift*

**Roanoke College** has received a \$250,000 challenge grant from the Cabell Foundation of Richmond to help fund upgrades. Those renovations will take place in the College's education department and Bast Center lobby, the ground floor renovation of Fintel Library, and a future renovation of the Belk Fitness Studios.

## *Christmas at Explore Park*

**Roanoke County and Center in the Square** have announced plans to host an annual holiday light show at Explore Park. The inaugural event will take place over 26 days between Friday, November 29 and Wednesday, January 1. Illuminights is a ticketed walking tour featuring over 500,000 lights

## *New BT buses*

The award-winning **Blacksburg Transit System** is adding five new all-electric buses and charging stations to its fleet over the next two years. Funding for the \$6.9 million project comes from the Virginia Departments of Rail and Public Transportation, and the Department of Environmental Quality.

## *Bradley branching out*

The **Bradley Free Clinic** in downtown

Roanoke – which now offers a monthly drop-in, no questions asked window for those battling opioid addiction to seek help – is opening a second front in Salem with an Outreach Site that will be open twice a month at the Salem Church of Christ on West Main Street. Free health screenings will also be available at the Salem church on the first and third Mondays of the month from 4 to 7pm.

## *Class of 2023 at VTCSOM*

The **Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine** has welcomed its 10th class of 43 freshmen to campus. More than 4400 originally applied for those 43 slots. Cal-Berkeley had the most students accepted with 3. Eight come from schools never before represented on the Roanoke campus. Four students come from underrepresented racial or ethnic groups.

## *Living history in Pulaski*

**Pulaski County** and the **City of Radford** have received a \$7500 grant from Virginia's 2019 Commemoration - American Evolution - to fund a series of events in honor of the 400th anniversary of the state and country's beginnings. “New River Trail Days: A Festival of Traditions, Faces and Tavern Fare,” will take place on November 22, when an actress/ interpreter will present a living history performance of Mary Draper Ingles, the frontier heroine portrayed

by James Alexander Thom's bestselling book, “Follow the River.” The event will be presented in a tavern-like setting in Radford and will include a tasting and history tour of beer, wine and cider. Tickets will go on sale later this summer.

## *Innovation Campus moves forward*

**Virginia Tech** expects to award contracts after receiving written design proposals for the first building on the new Innovation Campus in Northern Virginia that were due by mid-August. Representatives from around 175 firms were part of a standing room only crowd held in Crystal City Aug. 1. Virginia Tech officials will award the design contract later this year; Lionstone Investments is partnering with Virginia Tech on the 65 acre campus.

## *Kudos from trade magazine*

**Brown Edwards**, which has offices in Virginia, West Virginia and Tennessee, has been ranked as one of the Top 50 Construction Accounting Firms for 2019 by Construction Executive magazine, at #35 overall. Brown Edwards has served that industry for over 50 years.

## *Big gains*

Roanoke-based **Luna Innovations Inc.** posted strong second quarter growth for April-June – up 80 percent over the same period in 2018.

That boost came despite the fact that in the past year the fiber optics manufacturer absorbed two other companies, Micron Optics and General Photonics. For the full fiscal year 2019 overall revenue for Luna may approach 70 million dollars. "The Luna team continued to exceed our goals," said President and CEO Scott Graeff in a news release.

## *Hollins interim President salutes Lawrence*

In a letter sent to Alumnae and others with a connection to the school, Hollins University interim president Nancy Gray

said she joined Board of Trustee members in thanking former president Pareena Lawrence for her service and leadership over the past two years. Lawrence resigned effective June 30. "I am grateful for the new ideas she brought to Hollins and delighted to see long-awaited projects such as the student apartment village begin. I wish her the very best as she pursues her interests in international education and development," said Gray, the one-time president who agreed to come back in an interim role for the current academic

year while the board searches for a new president.

## *Cidery coming to Bedford*

**Legacy Cider** will invest \$300,000 to establish a new hard cider production facility in Bedford County. It will be located on-site with the owner's existing craft brewery, Apocalypse Ale

Works. The addition includes improvements to the existing taproom and beer garden. Legacy Cider will also create five new jobs and purchase \$146,000, or 12,150 bushels, of Virginia-grown apples over the next three year for its production use. Governor Ralph Northam was on hand for the announcement last month; the Commonwealth has

*Have an announcement about your business?*

Send announcements to [news@vbFRONT.com](mailto:news@vbFRONT.com)

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

# ARE YOU READY?

SEPT 6 | SUPERHOLD  
SEPT 20 | UPTOWN

**First Fridays**  
*Party* with a **PURPOSE**  
ROANOKEVA

**OCTOBERFEST OCT 4 | THE WORX**



# FRONT Notes

also approved a \$12,000 matching grant for the investment.

---

## *Award for environmental attorney*

The **Blue Ridge land Conservancy** will present Roanoke attorney Broadus Fitzpatrick with its highest honor, the A. Victor Thomas Environmental Stewardship Award, which recognizes significant contributions to the preservation of the natural heritage of western Virginia. The award will be presented at the BRLC's annual Conservation Celebration on September 22.

---

## *Princeton Review gives local schools kudos*

The **Princeton Review** 2020 edition of "The Best 385 Colleges," gives Roanoke College high marks for business and finance, computer science/engineering and psychology majors. The Princeton Review also gave Hollins University props for several programs including theater. Another ranking

of the top "green colleges" for 2018 ranked Virginia Tech as among the most environmentally responsible in North America and Europe.

---

## *Virginia Tech CRC developing shared workspace*

The **Corporate Research Center at Virginia Tech** is remodeling a space it intends to open early next month as COgro. The CRC calls it a shared work environment for budding businesses that will also encourage collaboration. It's being designed with entrepreneurs, remote workers, early stage companies and others in transition to permanent spaces says COgro Chief Operating Officer Dawn Myers.

---

## *High Tech Libraries*

**Roanoke County Public Libraries** has delivered NextLabs technology to its Glenvar and Vinton locations. In Glenvar a robot named Misty will give patrons the opportunity to learn

about artificial intelligence and coding. Meanwhile in Vinton the NextLabs will allow users to program a laser engraver that can be used by crafters and small business owners by appointment.

---

## *VWCC opens STEM building*

**Virginia Western Community College** students focused on science, technology, engineering and math are now taking classes in the new stand-alone \$30 million STEM building on the VWCC campus, which was dedicated and opened at the end of August.

---

## *Closings at Valley View*

The **O'Charley's** restaurant at Valley View Mall in Roanoke has closed. The Christiansburg location remains open. Meanwhile the struggling and iconic Sears department store chain is closing its Valley View location in October. The auto repair shop already shut down in August.

---

## *New digs in Botetourt*

**Cryopak**, which produces components for temperature monitoring devices and cold chain packaging, has purchased a property on Executive Drive in Botetourt County for \$680,000. Cryopak plans to relocate from Buchanan to the 13,600 square foot industrial building in the Cloverdale area near US 221.

---

## *High Marks for HCA*

The four **LewisGale Regional Health System** hospitals in Southwest Virginia have received a 2019 "Patient Safety Excellence Award" from the online medical resource "Healthgrades", after a four-year study that began in 2015. The review looked at 14 patient safety indicator rates.

---

## *Carilion among the best says magazine*

**Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital** has been named among the elite 13 percent of

1983 ••• 2019 ••• tomorrow



Is your business ready for  
**The Entré Experience?**

Our number one goal is, and always will be,  
Outstanding Customer Satisfaction!

CALL TODAY TO SCHEDULE A  
FREE COMMERCIAL SITE SURVEY

NETWORKING • VoIP PHONES • CLOUD • BACKUP • SECURITY

hospitals nationwide to win "Best" honors by U.S. News & World Report. Roanoke Memorial tied for third best hospital in Virginia, up from fourth last year. The new ranking ties with the highest-ever mark, which came in 2017

## One year anniversary

Martinsville-based **Carter Bank & Trust**, which has 104 branches in Virginia including southwestern Virginia, recently celebrated the

one year anniversary of its Customer Contact Center, also located in Martinsville. Vice President and Contact Center manager Veronica Bocock said in a release "it has become the hub of customer interaction." The center averages nearly 22,500 calls a month and employs 22 currently.

## Legacy store to be repurposed

The former Tinnell's Finer Foods store on Crystal Spring Avenue in

south Roanoke has been purchased by **South Jefferson LLC**, which will turn it into a new store with a focus on food service, catering and retail beer/wine sales. Cushman & Wakefield I Thalimer handled the \$620,000 sale.

## Street Pub Lite?

**Deschutes** may or may not ever build a beer production facility in Roanoke, and the Street Pub on Jefferson isn't coming back this

year. But the Oregon-based brewer will bring part of its Street Pub setup to Kirk Avenue for a scaled-down "Deschutes KirkFest Street Party" on Sunday, September 22 from 2 to 8pm. There's live music, eats from Lucky's and Martin's, big screens to watch football on etc. Tix are \$10 in advance; proceeds benefit ARCH (Trust House, Bethany Hall) and The Spot on Kirk.

Compiled by  
Gene Marrano

Check out additional FRONT Notes from Valley Business FRONT on our Facebook site or social media links at [www.vbFRONT.com](http://www.vbFRONT.com).

# Fuzzy Logic



**DALEVILLE**  
town center

# September 21

# Advertiser Index

Ameriprise Financial /  
Christine Smith .....53  
Anytime Fitness .....62  
Bank of Botetourt .....26  
Berryfield .....53  
Blacksburg Partnership:  
2019 BrewDo .....21  
Book No Further .....53  
Brown Hound Tree Service .....53  
Carilion Clinic .....BC  
Carter Bank & Trust .....54-55  
Citizens .....56  
Community Foundation  
Serving Western Virginia .....31  
Creekmore Law Firm .....37  
Crowning Touch .....53  
Daleville Summer Concert Series ..61  
Davis H. Elliot Company .....53

Dr. Pepper Park at the Bridges ... .57  
Entre Computer Center .....60  
First Fridays .....59  
Freedom First Credit Union .....2  
Garland Properties / Crafteria .....5  
Ginger's Jewelry .....3  
Glenn Feldmann Darby &  
Goodlatte .....29  
Green Home Solutions .....53  
High Hopes Dog Training .....36  
Posh Doodles of Virginia .....28  
Proofing Prof .....53  
Raleigh Court &  
Rehabilitation Center .....27  
RBTC .....34  
Suggestion Mailbox .....40  
VCOM .....35  
Virginia Business Systems .....63

“

She didn't want to be 'a hairstylist masquerading as a barber' — Page 23

“

If you treat kids like human beings and just try to help them, you will see what they are capable of — Page 35



**ANYTIME  
FITNESS®**

YOU'RE  
NEVER  
TOO  
BUSY  
FOR  
ANYTIME

**SALEM** SPARTAN SQ  
375-2900

**BLACKSBURG** FIRST&MAIN  
951-1340

**RADFORD** FAIRLAWN  
633-3004



# Teamwork.

It's how you win. And it's how we deliver.



## Fast Forward Document Solutions

**Proud to support Virginia Tech Athletics  
and provide digital copiers to Virginia Tech.**

**Now providing **xerox**  products**



**Roanoke • New River Valley • Lynchburg • Charlottesville  
Richmond • Tidewater • Shenandoah Valley • 540-362-3300**

**[VAbusinesssystems.com](http://VAbusinesssystems.com)**



## TRUST THE CLEAR CHOICE

Your home often provides the best medicine. That's why Carilion Clinic Home Care and Hospice deliver compassion, technology and experience right to your door.



\*varies by location\*

### **Carilion Clinic Home Care**

provides a wide range of high-quality services so you get exactly the care you need, from people you can trust.



### **Carilion Clinic Hospice**

has experienced and compassionate caregivers who provide comfort care and meet the needs of the entire family as you experience the rewarding moments in this part of life's journey.

