

Valley Business FRONT

VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE BUSINESS JOURNAL

ISSUE 147

DECEMBER 2020

Columnists Share
Leadership Insights

Virginia Tech Corporate
Research Center's
Brett Malone

Virginia Western
Community College's
Amy White

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Leadership
in a year
when we
desperately
needed it

The 2020
Business Leaders
FRONTList

Nancy Howell Agee
Carilion Clinic

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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.

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WELCOME TO THE FRONT

What makes a good leader? Vision and the ability to share it? Charisma? Fairness – even if being tough? Exuding calmness under pressure? Constantly thinking about workarounds when a roadblock appears? Setting the tone for a private company, a government department (or the whole enchilada), or a non-profit? Willingness to truly connect with subordinates and value what they bring to the table – even if you ultimately say no? Giving credit where credit is due? Taking necessary risks with a fallback plan in place – and your team on board? Being able to pivot successfully in a year like 2020 (geez, isn't it over yet – and will the first half of 2021 be any better?) The answer to all of these questions is – yes. There is no one trait that defines what an effective leader is.

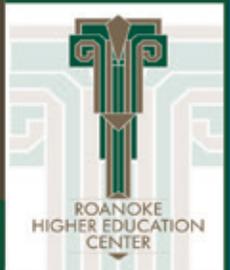
In this issue we'll hear from people in the region – some readers will know about, others not so much — about what they define leadership as and their journey to becoming a leader of significant impact. Some have connections to Valley Business FRONT as contributors (yes, we won't apologize and in fact we are proud of that!). We've also assembled a list of people with leadership skills – our list, certainly not complete; and you may not agree in all cases or you may say, hey so-and-so should be on that list, and here's why. Well, tell us about that at news@vbfront.com. Happy reading.

Tom Field
Publisher

Gene Marrano
Editor

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2020 FRONTLeaders in Business

By Tom Field and Gene Marrano



“Here's where I could make an impact. — Page 61

Cover photography of Nancy Howell Agee courtesy of Carilion Clinic.

VIRGINIA WESTERN

“*I have set myself apart from my peers to pursue a degree and not debt.*”

“The Community College Access Program has allowed me to focus on my studies in the STEM field without the added burden of wondering how I was going to pay for college. With this scholarship, I have set myself apart from my peers to pursue a degree and not debt. If I could give any piece of advice to high school students in Roanoke and surrounding areas, I would tell them to start at Virginia Western. I believe that I am better prepared for my future education and life because of the solid foundation that was given to me at Virginia Western with the help of CCAP.”

Brooke Bess

CCAP student at Virginia Western Community College

Virginia Western's Community College Access Program (CCAP) makes college possible for talented recent high school graduates in our service area.

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Advisory Board

Valley Business FRONT has organized an Advisory Board comprised of a selective group of diverse business professionals who support our mission and have an interest in how our business journal best serves our local communities and region. As a sounding board throughout their term, board members have been given the task of helping FRONT understand the issues and develop coverage. 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. 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 Advisory Board involves direct input on the various FRONTLists we present throughout the year. 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 contacting us with 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.

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Amy White
Virginia Western Community
College / education

“

...in the presence of a great leader, the first thing you sense is authenticity.

— Page 29

“

The best way to sabotage morale is to devalue contribution.

— Page 43

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 54.

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2020 FRONTLeaders in Business

By Tom Field and Gene Marrano

Valley Business FRONT presents leaders in business
for 2020—a year of unprecedented challenges.

Pivot.

A word repeated often in Virginia's Blue Ridge and across the globe this year—thanks to COVID-19 and the pandemic. Before "March Madness" could even begin this year, "pivoting" was most often used as a sports term in basketball. An offensive player who is not actively dribbling the ball, must keep one foot planted as he or she spins and moves to keep away from the defense before passing or shooting.

Keep planted while still moving to stay in the game.

That's exactly what nearly every business has had to do this year. Some businesses pivoted more than others. Some completely changed the pace of the game. And some couldn't survive the pressure and lost.

To be fair, some of our businesses that closed couldn't have pivoted enough, unless they:

1) completely changed the kind of game

they had always played (business model);

- 2) faced a different opponent or fans (customers, suppliers, stakeholders); or
- 3) played on a different court (markets forced to shut down, scale back, or remain open—depending where you are or what your state mandated).

Our FRONTList of Business Leaders in 2020 include examples of individuals who had to pivot a little or a lot. And though pivoting turned out to be a rather necessary skill for most leaders; this FRONTList shows resiliency in operations above everything else... no matter how it was accomplished. Most of the leaders on our list will tell you they just happened to be holding the coach's clipboard when the terrible economic crisis stormed the court.

The team prevails and any win comes from the players.

With that, let's get ready to rumble. Here's our 2020 FRONTList of Business Leaders:

(alphabetical order; see sidebar for FRONTLeaders by industry)

Individual

Nancy Agee: The Carilion Clinic President and CEO guided the region's largest employer through the height of the coronavirus pandemic – the first wave – when revenues from elective surgeries put on hold and fewer people coming to the emergency department dried up. Agee took a temporary pay cut like everyone else at the height of the pandemic this summer. (see separate story on Nancy Agee).

Hal and Kris Cone: While the real estate business actually bumped upwards during our challenging year of pandemic (facilitated by plummeting interest rates, record home sales, fast inventory turnover), real estate agents still had to adapt to new ways and demands for showing properties and working with both buyers and sellers. The Cones—already ahead in the game with their creative marketing tactics—juiced up their outreach even more with a newly branded Cone Realty Group, virtual tours, walk-thru scripted out like mini-movies, digital and physical mailings, and a YouTube channel that's all about showing off the best of Roanoke. It's an aggressive audience-building system to generate more referrals.

Beth Doughty: About to retire as executive director of the Roanoke Regional Partnership, Doughty helped reshape the greater valley by promoting outdoor amenities and quality of life, as a way to lure businesses and people here. From Eldor Corporation in Botetourt County to tenants like StikPak Solutions in Franklin County's still developing Summit View Business Park and the joint property near I-81 owned by Roanoke City/Roanoke County/Salem – being marketed to potential major tenants - Beth Doughty leaves her mark, adding that she has “a vast storage of knowledge about economic development that I can certainly share with other people.”

Greg Feldmann: CEO of the recently announced alliance featuring the Valleys Innovation Council, the Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council and the RAMP business accelerator is designed to take RAMP to the next level in fostering potential high growth tech businesses. A substantial grant will help as well. Feldmann, a financial advisor, is now at the wheel: “we have an on-ramp component to it now [and] this funding will also allow us to do what we are labeling exit-ramp programming for [RAMP] graduates and alumni that need continuing support and counseling.”

Michael Fleming: The TORC Robotics CEO keeps bringing some of the best economic announcements to Blacksburg, the New River Valley, and our region. This summer, the technology/manufacturing leader in autonomous vehicles reported another win, \$8.5 million in expansion and development at its facilities at Virginia Tech's Corporate



Courtesy of Carilion Clinic

Nancy Agee



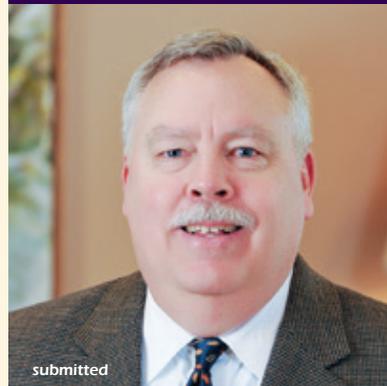
submitted

Hal and Kris Cone



submitted

Beth Doughty



submitted

Greg Feldmann



Abby Hamilton

Research Center and Blacksburg Industrial Park. Coupled with the still somewhat recent Daimler Trucks deal and other advancements that continue to populate tech and investor headlines, Fleming is a business “celebrity” sought after often, and by other movers and shakers.

Michael Friedlander: The executive director of the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute (just one of his titles) pivoted the FBRI into becoming a COVID-19 testing center for the region, while also overseeing the expansion of the Institute, which opened a new wing this Fall. That expansion will further enable another goal for the FBRI – turning more of the medical breakthroughs developed in the labs into commercial spinoffs that can save lives and enhance therapies. “The caliber of people working on this campus is absolutely extraordinary. They are doing groundbreaking biomedical and health sciences research in areas of tremendous need,” Friedlander has said of the FBRI.



Brian Hemphill

Abby Hamilton: Now the president and CEO at United Way of Roanoke Valley after many years at the non-profit, Hamilton connected with stakeholders and partners via regular teleconferences as the pandemic gained steam – with as many as 100 on a call at one time – investigating what shortages there was and who could help fill them, when it came to PPE, food, and other supplies. Also issues like, “rent and mortgage assistance, utilities that we know are going to be spiking when utility cutoff orders are lifted... some areas around mental health,” said Hamilton earlier this year.



Landon Howard

Lyn Hayth: Bank of Botetourt has certainly secured its role as a leader in community banking. As CEO, Hayth led the financial institution as it assisted almost 500 businesses with PPP through COVID, while growing deposits and lending, and opening another branch in Vinton.

Brian Hemphill: The Radford University president, like all college administrations, oversaw major adjustments in how the school could operate, but Hemphill did it in a space that was nationally headlined as a super concentrated area with COVID cases. Not only that, but RU allowed campus activities and even public rallies (with safety ordinances), when many other colleges sequestered or moved to mostly virtual.

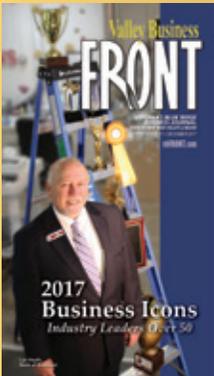
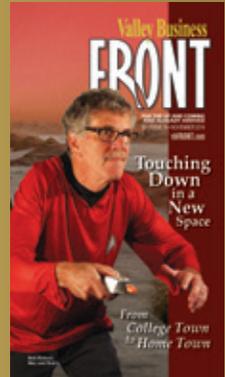


Jill Loope

Landon Howard: The president of Visit Virginia’s Blue Ridge celebrated 10 straight years of tourism revenue growth – a streak that will end in this year of the pandemic, but VVBR is already charting a path back he says, with a focus on luring visitors back to the region’s outdoor amenities and more socially-distanced lifestyles. “I think the potential for us getting back to normal by 2022 and seeing record numbers again is certainly on the way.”

Jill Loope: The economic development director for Roanoke County, on her watch, Mack Trucks has moved into Valley

Eight Previews to 2020



After we compiled our **FRONTlist of 2020 Business Leaders**, we noticed eight of our candidates happened to be FRONTcover models in back issues. We've reported on all of the businesses and organizations over the years, but it looks like we were once again, out FRONT in our predictions on the individuals that continue to succeed and exhibit leadership qualities.



Leadership means knowing your strengths and translating that knowledge into inspiring others.

— Lisa Clause, *Richfield Living*



Tech Park after extensive upgrades and is now building its mid-size truck series. "It's a 13-million-dollar investment and 250 new jobs. It's very exciting for the community [and] for the region. This is the type of project that will bring new people into the community," said Loope when the Mack Trucks announcement was made almost a year ago. Roanoke County has also seen several vacant properties upgraded and new tenants moved in – like the former Allstate building on Electric Road. There's the Reimagine 419 project including a Tanglewood Mall makeover as well.



Today's best leaders listen intently, serve those around them, and enable people to achieve great things without consideration for who gets the credit.

— Mike Dame,
Carilion Clinic



submitted

Sonu Singh



submitted

Lucas Thornton

Annette Patterson: Through the Vinton-based Advancement Foundation and its Gauntlet competition, The Hive small business incubator and the Innovation Mill – where startups with high-growth potential are nurtured – Patterson has become a force to reckon with when it comes to small business development. No home runs yet perhaps, but a number of singles and doubles. With COVID-19 figuring to still be a factor come late winter, Patterson is turning the virtual model used this past spring for the Gauntlet into a hybrid model for the 2021 competition, which now awards more than \$250,000 in cash and in-kind services to participants in the Shark Tank-like event. Several hundred mentors have also volunteered their time to work on business plans with the startups. “We’re trying to prepare them to move on to that next level, where they can begin to get out into the market, maybe get some investment.”

Sonu Singh: To say this leader is so high up he’s in the cloud—is no overstatement. As founder and CEO of “the cloud company” 1901 Group, Singh announces one of the fastest expansions from any technology company in our region. He’s established an Enterprise Operations Center in Blacksburg and positioned the business as a leader in public sector managed services, cloud migration, software development, and cyber engineering. In common speak, he’s taken a small group of geeks around Virginia Tech all the way to a major IT contractor in the US, employing hundreds.

Jeanne Stosser: The New River Valley developer (see the November feature story) and her SAS family-owned company has broken ground on its latest project – the Vue apartment complex near Virginia Tech’s burgeoning Corporate Research Center, which will feature more than 200 units, and aims to target the young professionals working at the CRC.

Isabel and Lucas Thornton: She rebuilds and renovates blighted homes in Roanoke, taking advantage of grants and historic tax credits, turning older homes into multi-family affordable rental properties. “It’s something that I think adds so much value to a city, so maybe it’s borne of just a passion for Roanoke and wanting Roanoke to do well as a city,” says Isabel Thornton. The other half of this young power couple focuses on downtown Roanoke apartment spaces like Gramercy Park and the proposed Campbell Court mix-used development that Lucas Thornton is working with the city on – providing they can find another home for a new Valley Metro bus depot.

Ed Walker: As the early redeveloper of older properties into downtown Roanoke living spaces – you can say Walker got the ball rolling. He’s now turning a multistory building in Southeast Roanoke City (in the 9th Street industrial park once home to American Viscose) into living spaces.

Two-Time FRONTcover Model



Carilion Clinic's **Nancy Howell Agee** has the distinction of being the only business leader who has been on the Valley Business FRONT cover—twice. (And both times it was for our annual FRONTList of business leaders.) Check out the FRONT November 2011 edition, and of course... this edition.



Collective

Local governments step up: Kudos to the localities that stepped up to use federal CARES Act money, dispersing it (often in several waves) to help local small businesses weather the worst of the coronavirus shutdown. Each locality had their own parameters and shifted them at times to make those grants work more effectively. Aside from pandemic response, some government leaders kept going full steam ahead on other priorities, from transportation and infrastructure upgrades to specific projects, like Delegate **Terry Austin**, who was inspired to launch a uniform health care curriculum for high school students in Roanoke and Botetourt County.

Arts & Cultural Organization and Performance Venue leaders: Mill Mountain Theatre, Jefferson Center, Roanoke Children's Theatre, Southwest Virginia Ballet, Taubman Museum of Art, Center in the Square, Moss Arts Center, 5 Points Music Sanctuary, Dr Pepper Park and others all did their share of pivoting this year to stay relevant in the face of a shutdown that kept the public locked out. That often meant performances (or museum gallery tours) produced digitally, shared for free or for a fee with patrons. Jefferson Center filmed a series of concerts on its stages and then used them in part as a fundraiser late in the year. Notes executive director Cyrus Pace: "we've got great venues, a really good production staff, let's see what we can put together – and then present that as a package."

Chamber leaders: Beth Bell with the Salem Roanoke County Chamber of Commerce and Chris Finley with the



submitted

Terry Austin



submitted

Cyrus Pace



FB photo

**Jimmy Delgado and
Kat Pascal**



Leadership involves thinking creatively about the next step, supporting and mentoring the people that work with and for you, the ability and confidence to make changes as necessary on the fly. People who are true leaders seem to have that "It" quality about them and never seem to run short of the energy needed to make things better.

— Gene Marrano, Valley Business FRONT

Smith Mountain Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce both assumed those roles within the past year or so and went to work with networking events (often online, like Bell's Monday morning check-ins) and a spate of ribbon cuttings. Finley and the SMLRCC have also launched a business leadership academy for members.

Local eateries pivot: From aggressively marketing curbside pickup and home delivery to setting up outdoor dining areas – sometimes in parking lots, like **Kat Pascal** and **Jimmy Delgado** did at FarmBurguesa in Roanoke's Grandin Village (joined by Local Roots and several other eateries on same block), **Hunter Johnson** and **JP Powell** at Lucky and Fortunato, **Cody Thompson** and **Chris Mullens** at Zeppoli's in Blacksburg, **Bob Rotanz** of Salem's Mac & Bob's – restaurant owners did what they could to keep the doors open and people working. Including **Roland Macher** of Macado's, who used CARES Act money and adopted a takeout/delivery model very early on to keep as many people working during Phase 1 of the COVID-19 restrictions. "The very first day we were told that we would have to shut down we launched our in-house delivery. That meant that our staff could continue [working]," said Kat Pascal. In some cases for local restaurants, it meant preparing meals that non-profits delivered to school children and families stranded at home during the pandemic, many of those families scraping by with the breadwinners often out of work. There have been casualties, eateries that didn't make it, but others held on until Phase 3 made their business model more practical in many (but not all) cases. 🍷

2020 FRONTLeaders (by industry)

Financial FRONT

- Lyn Hayth, Bank of Botetourt

Healthcare/Wellness FRONT

- Nancy Agee, Carilion Clinic CEO

Legal FRONT

- Gentry Locke (COVID team, services, workshops for business response)

Service (Restaurant) FRONT

- Jimmy Delgado, FarmBurguesa



Chris Mullens and Cody Thompson, Zeppoli's

- **Hunter Johnson**, Lucky and Fortunato restaurants
- **Roland Macher**, Macado's
- **Chris Mullens**, Zeppoli's
- **Kat Pascal**, FarmBurguesa
- **JP Powell**, Lucky and Fortunato restaurants
- **Bob Rotanz**, Mac and Bob's
- **Cody Thompson**, Zeppoli's

Development FRONT (real estate, construction, architecture)

- **Hal Cone**, Cone Realty Group
- **Kris Cone**, Cone Realty Group
- **Jeanne Stosser**, SAS Builders
- **Lucas Thornton**, developer
- **Isabel Thornton**, developer
- **Ed Walker**, developer

Education FRONT

- **Brian Hemphill**, Radford University

““”

Take advantage of lots of different opportunities. Create lasting relationships.

— *Nance Agee, Carilion Clinic*

““”

I've had good leaders and terrible leaders throughout my life. To me, it comes down to the golden rule: treat others as you would have them treat you. People will believe in you because they know that you respect them and they will take on any challenge with you.

— *Tim Bradshaw, Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport*

submitted



Waynette Anderson



submitted

Tyler Godsey



submitted

Cindy Petersen



Bella Muse

Ginger Poole



submitted

Brett Roden



submitted

James Sears



submitted

Pedro Szalay



submitted

Ruth Waalkes



submitted

Christopher Finley

Culture FRONT**(arts, museums, performance venues)**

- **Waynette Anderson**, Dr Pepper Park
- **Tyler Godsey**, 5 Points Music Sanctuary
- **Cyrus Pace**, Jefferson Center
- **Cindy Petersen**, Taubman Museum of Art
- **Ginger Poole**, Mill Mountain Theater
- **Brett Roden**, Virginia Children's Theatre
- **James Sears**, Center in the Square
- **Pedro Szalay**, Southwest Virginia Ballet
- **Ruth Waalkes**, Moss Arts Center

Technology & Manufacturing FRONT

- **Michael Fleming**, TORC Robotics
- **Sonu Singh**, 1901 Group

Government FRONT

- **Terry Austin**, Virginia House of Delegates
- **Jill Loope**, Roanoke County Economic Development

Organizational FRONT

- **Beth Bell**, Salem-Roanoke County Chamber of Commerce
- **Beth Doughty**, Regional Partnership (retired)
- **Chris Finley**, Smith Mountain Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce
- **Abby Hamilton**, United Way of Roanoke Valley
- **Landon Howard**, Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge

Entrepreneurial FRONT

- **Greg Feldmann**, Valleys Innovation Council
- **Annette Patterson**, The Advancement Foundation



Leadership should be boldly subtle. Bold enough to inspire transformational thinking and followship, while subtle enough to welcome innovation, conversation and action.

— *Amy White*,
Virginia Western
Community College



Indeed, the definition of leadership is about having followers; but it's interesting to discover our best leaders are those who push others ahead.

— *Tom Field*,
Valley Business FRONT



Nancy Agee

***“Lean In”* says Carilion’s Nancy Agee if you’re looking to lead**

By Gene Marrano

For someone who says she never aspired to the Carilion Clinic CEO, Agee is marking a mark in her beloved hometown.

For Carilion Clinic CEO Nancy Howell Agee, leadership in 2020 has also meant managing the coronavirus as front-line staff treated infected patients. Agee says Carilion Clinic is better prepared for any spike in COVID-19 that may fill up beds in its ICU ward again. “More clarity,” as to safety precautions that staff, patients and hospital/clinic visitors should be wearing and “sufficient supplies,” of personal protective equipment (as of early November) also meant that Carilion had no intention of again suspending elective surgeries and non-emergency patient visits, Agee noted.

She also said then that “elective” surgeries (an important revenue stream) are somewhat of a misnomer, calling many of those procedures “important,” with evidence of health issues among patients that had to delay them. “We would really have to be pushed to the mat to do that [again].” Earlier this year Agee announced via a video recording that all employees had to take a 10-20% pay cut – a temporary measure that lasted about two months. “It was a really tough thing to do – it was a gut check. People in health care don’t make millions of dollars. Everyone needs their income, and everyone was working hard in a very strange time. We had to make very tough decisions. It was one of the toughest things I’ve ever had to do.”

Trust yourself enough to work with people “smarter, braver and wiser”

But that’s what leaders do, make tough decisions, a skill Nancy Agee has been honing since she started out as a nurse and worked her way up through the Carilion health system. Looking back Agee said she was a leader in high school and in nursing school – a “high energy person” imbued with a curiosity for “disparate points of view.” She likens it to assembling a jigsaw puzzle. There were also mentors along the way, and they identified her as a potential leader. Now she looks for those traits in others and hopes it’s seen as a “hallmark” of her own management style. She says she is surrounded by people at Carilion that are, “smarter, braver and wiser than I. I couldn’t be more excited and proud about that.”

Agee calls herself a “servant leader,” subscribing to the notion that rather than lead from way

THE AGEE FILE

Nancy Howell Agee is president and chief executive officer of Carilion Clinic, a nearly \$2 billion not-for-profit integrated health system headquartered in Roanoke, serving more than 1 million people in Virginia and West Virginia. Carilion Clinic includes seven hospitals and also operates complementary business lines, including home health, imaging services, pharmacies, free-standing surgical clinics and a physician group with more than 1,000 employed physicians. She is married to Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals Judge G. Stephen Agee.

Before becoming CEO in 2011, Agee served as executive vice president and chief operating officer. During her tenure as COO, she co-led Carilion’s reorganization from a collection of hospitals to a fully integrated, physician-led clinic. The reorganization resulted in a partnership with Virginia Tech to create a medical school and research institute. Agee was named one of Modern Healthcare’s top 25 women in health care in 2017 and one of the national magazine’s 100 most influential people in health care in 2016 and 2017.

She began her career in nursing and holds degrees with honors from the University of Virginia and Emory University, also participating in postgraduate studies at the Kellogg School of Business, Northwestern University. Besides realizing how “it was darn cold up there,” in Chicago during the winter, Agee says studying negotiating techniques taught her that “you should walk away from a negotiation with both parties feeling good about it. It isn’t win-lose, it’s truly win-win.” At the bargaining table neither side may get everything they wanted, “but over the long term they get much more.” She also was awarded honorary degrees from Roanoke College and Jefferson College of Health Sciences. Agee is an adjunct professor at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine

Agee was previously Chairman for Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association, Chairman at Virginia Center for Healthcare Innovation and Trustee at American Hospital Association, Inc. She sits on a number of boards in the Roanoke area.



out in front, it's her mission to encourage, foster and facilitate others, helping to hone their own leadership skills. "That's really important to build a team." Active listening means seeking to understand, realizing that even CEO's make mistakes (Agee laughs that she probably makes "hundreds of them," – doubtful.) Find out what motivates others. As for the age old born a leader vs. becoming a leader, Agee insists it's not either-or. "I see all sorts of leaders in my industry, from a quiet, thoughtful introvert to a very strong leader, incredibly smart, strategic, thoughtful, energetic, [an] extrovert."

A leader is also at the right place and right time, under the right circumstances says Agee - who leads the largest employer in the Roanoke Valley. Agee pegs herself as an extrovert, someone motivated by and who enjoys being around other people. "I love those interactions."

She does value her quiet downtime as well. Coming up as a nurse may have something to do with that: "the really good nurses are compassionate and try to understand what it's like to be in another person's shoes. [Also] being nonjudgmental, caring. This we encourage and foster– as well as being a critical thinker. Bringing out the best in [a] team."

A "choir of people," helped lift her up along the way

Starting with Agee's grandmother, who was a widow raising four children during the World War II era. "She went back to work, bought a home and did some amazing things. She actually raised me during several of my formative years and was my biggest cheerleader. She always told me I could do anything I wanted to – but you had to

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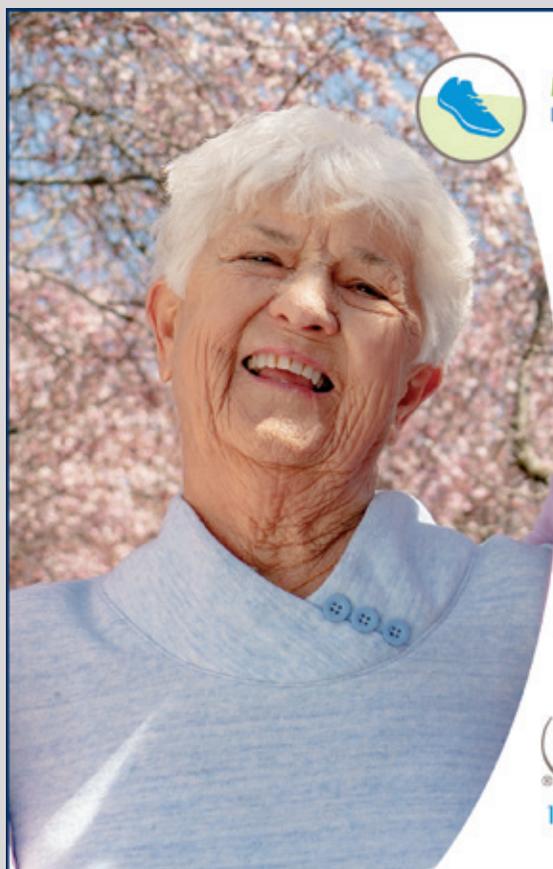
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work hard at it." So, Agee did just that.

All the Carilion Clinic leadership staff brings value to the job, but promoting clinical leaders – especially other nurses rising through the ranks – “speaks to my heart a little bit.” She laughs at her own journey, claiming there wasn’t a point where becoming the Chief Executive Officer became her overarching goal. She “loved” being Chief Operating Officer and wasn’t seeking to be CEO, “but the Board identified me and asked if I would take it on. I’ve never looked back. I have absolutely appreciated being the CEO of this fabulous organization, right here in my hometown, in a region that I love.”

Her advice for other aspiring leaders, in whatever field that might be: “lean in, take advantage of lots of different opportunities. Create lasting relationships. I got involved in some community activities, [even] as a

staff nurse (Mill Mountain Theatre, American Cancer Society, etc.) and developed lasting relationships.” Nancy Agee also found that “disparate thought . . . made a real difference for me. Find ways to promote yourself, take on the extra work. People will notice.” All of that leaning in certainly worked for Nancy Agee. 



Martha Sullivan
Pneumonia recovery

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BUSINESS OPERATIONS

By Mike Leigh

Executive Summary:
It's an age-old question, tackled here by our award-winning columnist.

Send your questions
or comments to Mike@
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Are leaders made or born?

At the conclusion of a recent leadership program I held for a group of business leaders, one of the participants opined that "Leaders are born, not made." I thought it was a strange comment to make because this person, who happens to be a manufacturing plant manager, has completed three different leadership programs with me over the past few years.

Later I asked him, "Why have you participated in so much leadership development with me if you believe leaders are not made?" You see, I didn't agree with his opinion (or else I wouldn't be developing leaders in my business!) and I wanted to understand his thinking.

What followed was a good discussion about leadership talent.

Talent can be defined as a special or natural aptitude or skill. We often use talent to describe those who excel in athletic or artistic pursuits, but talent applies to all types of skills, including listening, thinking strategically, and being empathetic. And yes, leadership is also a skill.

Are there some people who have more natural talent as a leader? I think so. Good leadership behaviors result from having certain leadership attitudes and beliefs, and there are some who have natural tendencies toward these thinking patterns. However, many of these habits of thought are also developed from a lifetime of experiences and past influences. What might look like a natural talent or skill can also be the result of past conditioning and development.

Are leaders made or born? The answer is both. Everyone can improve their leadership skills through effective development techniques. However, for those who may not possess natural leadership talent, or who have been conditioned to think and act in ways that are contrary to effective leadership behaviors, leadership development is much harder.

Effective leadership is too important to not invest in development. But it is just as important to closely evaluate a candidate's leadership skill before promotion or hiring, and not just select leaders based on experience or technical ability. Some of the most effective leaders I have worked with had NO prior leadership and technical experience in their roles.

So why did that manufacturing leader attend my programs? He just wanted to continue to improve. If you select your leadership candidates carefully and regularly provide them development, your leadership team (and your organization) will also improve. 📖

“ ”

Some of the most effective leaders...
had NO prior leadership experience.

Don't pay more for the same health insurance

I've seen a lot of confusion about health care subsidies and tax credits. People are sometimes throwing away thousands a month unnecessarily. Just because you have an annual salary that you think is too high to qualify doesn't mean you won't. There's a lot more to calculating your income for tax purposes than what's reflected on a w-2 or 1099.

What's available through [healthcare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov) is the exact same insurance that you buy off the street, or from a broker. Health insurance companies base products on demographics and only put out so many in an area. These must be offered on [healthcare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov).

You can make up to \$85,320 a year with a family of three or \$49,960 if you're single and still be eligible for tax credits to lower your premium. The only way you can get premium tax credits is if you buy your insurance through [healthcare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov). This is not welfare. You're paying for this through taxes and are entitled to use it. Smart people do.

Think about it like the standard deduction that was increased substantially in 2018. Do you decide not to take that \$12,400 or \$24,800 on principal? Does it make you feel good to give money to Uncle Sam unnecessarily? Of course not.

It's not just about money in your pocket, it's about being able to pay your bills. Even if you get reimbursed for overpaying on health insurance premiums, that money you're having to pay every month kills cash flow all year long.

Subsidies are based on what you estimate as future income. Tax credits are based on your tax return. But you have to wait a year and a half to get that money if you've overestimated income for the subsidy. That's because you're submitting tax returns in April of the following year. For example, your next subsidy period will start in January 2021, but you won't see tax credits on premium overpayments until Federal returns are filed in 2022.

Factors such as the Self-employed Health Insurance Deduction, qualified income tax deductions, and many other issues come into play. That's why it's important that your tax professional is using strategies to ensure your income is low.

Now's the time to figure this out. If you wait until 2021, you'll be too late to apply for health insurance through [healthcare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov). Talk to a good tax advisor if you need help figuring this out. 



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FINANCIAL FIGURES

By Michael Shelton

Executive Summary:
Healthcare coverage may cost you and your family less via the Affordable Care Act website.

Michael Shelton is a financial retirement counselor. Reach him at michael@discover360.com Financial.com



submitted photos

Learning to lead well: it's a marathon, not a sprint says new CRC director

By Jennifer Poff Cooper

“This role is nothing but leadership and vision,” says Brett Malone.

The new President and CEO of the Corporate Research Center (CRC) in Blacksburg (adjacent to the Virginia Tech campus) is Brett Malone. To him leadership is all about being in service to “help people see a bigger vision and inspire confidence in them to chase their dreams,” trusting that they will indeed make that first sale, get that funding, or achieve whatever their goals are.

Malone has made a career of leading companies in multiple industries, primarily with start-ups and early stage small technology companies. He had leadership models to teach him when he was just starting out. Long-time CRC President and CEO Joe Meredith was one (see our January 2020 VBF story for more on him). Others were professionals at places like DuPont, already established in their careers. “I learned from the best,” said Malone.

He was also hungry to learn the business side of science. With his Virginia Tech engineering education, he never doubted his scientific acumen, but it was mentors who gave him the confidence in his business and leadership abilities. Malone said the greatest leadership advice he ever received was from his father, who emphasized staying grounded. “He told me, ‘Never forget where you came from.’”

Malone has had a 25-year relationship with the CRC. He earned his bachelor’s, master’s, and Ph.D. in aerospace engineering from Virginia Tech and launched his first start-up company, Phoenix Integration, in the CRC in 1995. Malone went on to consult for other technology companies in the park

and eventually branched out into national freelance consulting, which took him all the way to Colorado and then the west coast.

However, he always maintained a home in Blacksburg, and when the CRC search committee came knocking upon the retirement of Meredith, Malone saw an opportunity not only to come home but to provide leadership to the 220 or so companies in the park. New in 2020 was the COgro shared workspace facility for startups that’s also part of the CRC.

Malone said recently that this job has been his most challenging opportunity yet. He respects that the existing team has been under different leadership for a long time. While Malone has his own vision for the CRC, he is careful to bring along that team by tapping their potential, to help the CRC “move to the next level.”

Malone said while the staff may be pivoting toward his ideals, he emphasized that this new vision should be a shared one, saying that leadership is also about “empowering people and honoring what got us here.” He supports CRC tenants by helping the younger entrepreneurs understand principles of business and leadership. Most of the mentoring is not formal, but rather Malone takes the time for day to day conversations. “I want to give back what I got.”

He likens leading in business to his side role as a marathon coach. A seasoned runner needs little help. But for a first-time marathoner, there is a tremendous amount of unknown and there are barriers that people are only too happy to point out. Malone sees his job in both the running



and business worlds as helping people become confident that they can achieve their goals.

Motivating and activating people's strengths is also a primary component of leadership for Malone. In his current position, he is taking people who were there under Joe Meredith's leadership and "evolving the team carefully over time." Perhaps he sees more potential or discerns that someone is in a position where they will not reach their

full potential; if so, he does some tweaking.

"It is important to always recognize the contributions of others," Malone said, noting that there is a lot of "bad leadership" out there right now, like those at the top who are arrogant or egotistical. He is convinced that people can tell the difference between fake and genuine interest; real leaders are humble and show interest in their people.

Another downfall of leaders is telling people

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what to do or even doing their work for them, Malone said. His philosophy is that leaders instead motivate and help team members have the vision to execute their own plans.

Moving forward, Malone's vision for the Corporate Research Center is to continue to build and expand the park's identity. He wants to foster the unique relationship with Virginia Tech, developing even closer connections. His vision also involves an aggressive recruiting campaign, then having the CRC take an active role in attracting other resources to support the companies there. "I feel strongly about recruiting companies that are doing cutting edge work."

This era of COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of adding more physical space - such as labs that host work routines which cannot be done from home virtually. Malone also wants the CRC to have national and

international footprints through partnerships with companies that do complementary work. In summary, it is a leader's job said Brett Malone to help people see the potential in their work and to "build teams that have resolute faith in themselves - to keep pushing forward and see what's possible." 



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A LITTLE INSIGHT

By Bruce C. Bryan

Executive Summary:
If everyone around you is a "yes person" it's hard to get valuable and straightforward input.

Bruce C. Bryan is the president of 5Points Creative, an award-winning advertising and marketing agency in Roanoke. Contact him at bruce@5PointsCreative.com

Bad Commercials2Get Attention

Every market has one of these types. Here in the Roanoke-Lynchburg television market, where our marketing firm is based, we are lucky enough to have two. I'm talking about car dealers with terrible commercial campaigns. No, it isn't limited to just automotive marketing, but these guys are the obvious culprits. The two dealers I'm referencing epitomize memorable commercials – but not in a good way. One of them does it because he wants his commercials to be bad as a way to get recognized. Ironically, the other one actually believes he is doing a good job. Apparently, he has no idea.

I would imagine both of these guys get feedback from neighbors, frightened employees, TV sales reps, and maybe even family and friends telling them, "I saw you on TV", or "great job on TV." Oh, they're getting noticed and these types of ads may actually be creating attributable sales, but at what cost? In these situations, I can't help but wonder, how much more business would the dealer be doing with decent and "good" interrupting informative messages?

Ways4You to Improve Your Commercials

Honestly, a strong business that wants to cut through the clutter doesn't necessarily need to hire an advertising agency to guide them toward making a greater impact. There are other capable resources for creative ideas and unique ways to achieve improved top of mind awareness. Whichever method you decide to use in order to move your business forward, I'd recommend you start with getting honest feedback from folks who know what they're talking about.

If everyone around you is a "yes person" it's hard to get valuable and straightforward input. Business owners (just like car dealers) need people around them who will give input that will actually help improve things. That's harder to do when you only interact with inside employees or people who will tell you what you want to hear. This is true in the automotive world AND everywhere in business.

Finally, you need to discover a unique way to communicate your message. If you don't, you run the risk of being just like everyone else or getting lost in the sludge of a three-minute commercial break. The fact is, no one really wants to look and sound like everyone else or be lost in the middle of a bunch of spots. However, either one of those situations is better than being remembered by viewers and your potential customers as a real-life nincompop. 🙄

“”
Start with getting honest feedback from folks who know what they're talking about.

Leading from the edge of your seat

Leadership, leadership, leadership. A topic of many conversations these days. It is not difficult to distinguish great leadership from average or even poor leadership. In the business world, strong leadership is almost tangible with evidence of success coming through financial gain. Some people just seem to be more adept at leadership - consistent self-awareness, inspiring communication of a vision, and the gift of keeping the almighty ego in check. They get comfortable leading from the edge of their seat, ready to adapt in a moment's notice based on what challenge is coming their team's way.

Some years ago, I attended a 7-day intensive program through the Center for Creative Leadership called, Developing the Strategic Leader. It was an extremely comprehensive leadership program packed full of "mirrors" that came in the form of confidential surveys about me as a leader, from my staff, my peers, and my bosses. The exercise of viewing your leadership through the lenses of others was powerful. I learned what others needed from me in order to be productive, inspired, and included.

Leadership is the fulcrum that moves mountains. The best leaders embody what they say they're after both in words and in actions. If you've ever been in the presence of a great leader, the first thing you sense is authenticity. This reflection of integrity and charisma creates a natural trust and loyalty; such an environment is one that everyone can fully support.

Strong leaders shine even brighter when things are not going their way. Why? Because the people around them are loyal and motivated to work harder as they observe their leader consistently demonstrating his/her dedication to the dream, acknowledgements of his/her own failures, and a willingness to empower employees.

So why then aren't there more legendary leaders in our midst? I understand that this leadership deal is not for the faint of heart. In order to advance as a stronger, more effective leader, we must be highly motivated to do the work of true self-evaluation and seek feedback from those we lead. We must implement personal change with disciplined self-control in the midst of doing the day to day work, all while we rise to motivate and inspire people to deliver on a shared vision. It's hard fought work becoming a strong leader.

If we muster the grit to fight the good fight of becoming a more effective leader, the rewards are rich and will transform our organizations, our team, and our community as a whole. 



SMALL BUSINESS TOOL KIT

By Annette Patterson

Executive Summary:

The best leaders embody what they say they're after both in words and in actions.



courtesy photos

Lois James teaching Effective Personal Productivity program to EZ Rampz Mobility Solution employees.

WHO MAKES A GREAT LEADER?

By Lois James

Leaders at all levels should be striving to continuously improve says a local leadership coach.

Have you ever noticed that a person's leadership skills are strongly connected with their personality traits? Different people have different natural leadership strengths. Many people believe that leaders are born. Others believe that leaders are made through growth opportunities, experience, and training. There is no doubt that some people naturally rise to the top quickly while others hone their skills over years of learned experience. Either way, having leadership "soft skills", especially in today's world, is crucial for being a successful leader. How can you identify your natural leaders?

Initiative: In every culture, there are employees who do what is expected of them and not much more. But, fortunately, there are also employees who naturally step up and take on

more responsibility and initiative - the ones who have the potential to be great leaders.

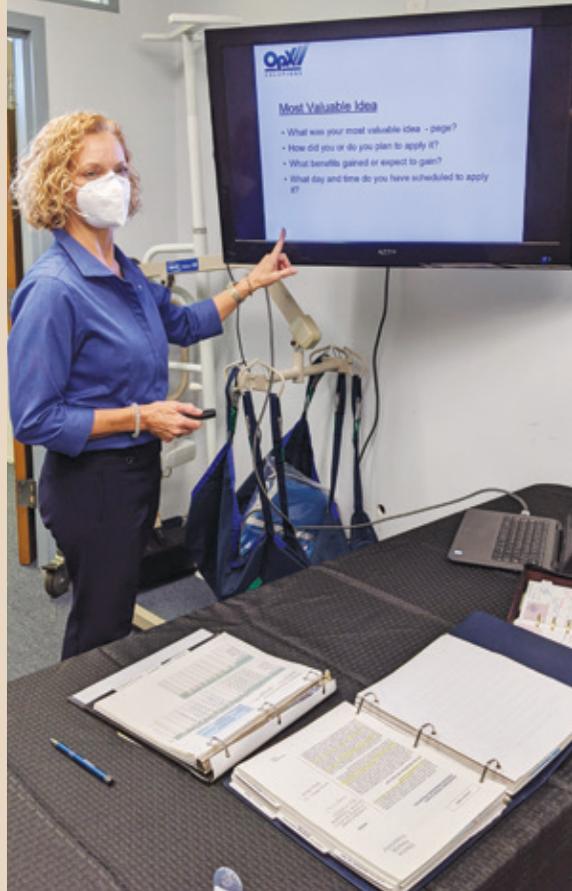
Effective Communication: Someone who practices active, empathetic listening is more likely to be a successful leader. The ability to listen, understand, and give others a voice demonstrates true leadership. Being able to communicate clear messages and expectations and make complex ideas understandable is also a sign of a leader. Effective communication is about both listening and explaining information clearly with all levels of an organization.

Personal Leadership and Motivation: Another crucial skill for effective leadership is being able to not only inspire and motivate others but to inspire and motivate yourself. Before you can

lead a team, you have to be able to successfully lead yourself. Most people do not invest enough time and effort into developing themselves - one of the most important things leaders can do. People follow by example, and if leaders set the example of continuously improving themselves and motivating themselves, others will follow.

Strategic Thinking Transformed to Actional Steps: Strategic thinking and turning ideas into action are skills needed on every level. For upper management, developing strategies to take the organization into the next 5 to 10 years is just as important as the entry level and mid-level managers' ability to understand and carry out those strategies. Great leaders give their team members the flexibility and opportunity for growth when they encourage team members to develop new ideas to accomplish these long-range strategies.

Goal Setting and Tracking: The best way to accomplish short- and long-range strategies is to set, track, and accomplish goals. Someone who plans, sets, and accomplishes goals for themselves and for their teams that are in alignment with company goals is a great example of an effective leader. Once goals are set, efforts must be made to motivate and encourage others to see the value of the goal and to engage everyone on the team in reaching the goal. Great leaders accomplish more measurable results and profitability for the organization when they set and accomplish goals that include their team's buy-in and commitment.



Employees who show the potential to be great leaders often already have some of these leadership skills and only need encouragement and support from upper management to sharpen them. But leaders at all levels should be striving to continuously improve their leadership skills. 

Lois James is Director of Leadership Development for OpX Solutions, a performance improvement company. www.OpXSolutionsllc.com.

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Joint effort to raise funds for new non-profit >

Three local businesses – **Texas Tavern**, **Black Dog Salvage** and **Simply Framing by Kristi** – joined forces to raise more than \$5000 for Tudor House, a new non-profit formed after the suicide of Louis Tudor. Tudor House focuses on suicide prevention, education and support. Three vintage Texas Tavern were auctioned off on eBay to support that effort. Louis Tudor was the longtime owner of Tudor’s Biscuit World and a popular swim coach before taking his own life this past summer. Matt Bullington owns Texas Tavern: “one [sign] was on the front of the building for years; we gave to our friends at Black Dog Salvage to put the finishing touch on. That’s a signature piece.” Black Dog added a custom dark frame fashioned from barn wood.

Mike Whiteside from Black Dog Salvage got to know Louis Tudor when he installed a balcony rail at the former Biscuit World location in downtown Roanoke. “He was just a staple in this area, people loved him. I’m really proud to be part of this fundraiser. Mental illness is a big thing these days – it always has been. Bringing awareness to it and letting people talk about it, and understand it, that’s very important.”

Molly Bullington is the marketing director for husband Matt Bullington’s tavern and says Louis Tudor was her swim coach (for their kids

as well). She recalls Tudor’s cash register breaking down and Matt lending his backup register in the wee hours of the morning. “He was competition but at the same time we were all in it together. We were such great friends.” Bullington says Louis Tudor was “full of personality. To see him decline in mental health like that it’s scary – he was just like anyone of us.” The pandemic’s impact was a factor says Bullington, something his family members had indicated as well after Tudor’s suicide.

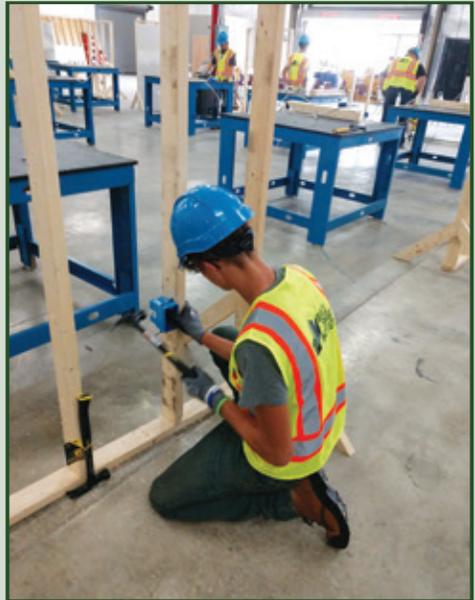
Kathleen Thorell, interim director of Tudor House said after receiving the 5K check in November that the total raised to date was \$66,000. “Which is fabulous, I’m kind of overwhelmed with how far we’ve come since July. But we also realize that it’s probably just the tip of the iceberg that we need to make our mission happen.” The initial goal is to renovate the old Tudor’s Biscuit World in downtown Roanoke, for use as a suicide prevention resource center and meeting place.



Build Smart Institute teaching trade skills with aim to fill job openings >

After a quiet launch in late summer the **Build Smart Institute** on Gainsboro Road in Roanoke cut a ribbon early last month. Rob Leonard is director at the Institute, which was created by F&S Building Innovations in Roanoke, which he also works for. It's about training people in various aspects of the construction trade to become "career ready," he notes. Those who take Build Smart Institute courses however can go work anywhere they want to in the industry. "We make our facility open to anybody that's interested in coming into the trade." That's from middle school on up says Leonard; there are also professional development courses for those already in the construction business and looking to get ahead by taking courses on project management or advanced technical skills for example .

The motivation for Build Smart Institute is fairly simple says Leonard: there are not enough skilled people entering the construction field and jobs often go unfilled. He points to predictions made in the 1970's that the push to send young people to four-year colleges was going to lead to a lack of skilled workers for many trades – and it's here now. "[We] started to figure out at the turn of the century that we're in trouble – there's no succession, we have nobody young coming in, a lot of the [industry] veterans are aging out. 25 percent of those in construction now are over age 55."





FiftyCentLove Photographie

MINDFUL BUSINESS

By Beth Bell

Executive Summary:
Five tips for leading through turbulent times.

Beth Bell is the executive director for the Salem-Roanoke County Chamber of Commerce and helped found FemCity Roanoke, a business networking community for women. Contact her at bethboydbell@gmail.com.

Wondering how to lead through these times?

FemCity is a members only women's networking group, founded on a mission to create a new kind of networking for women based on community, collaboration and supportive spirit. Founder, Violette de Ayala, has been showing its thousands of members what that means in current COVID times, having chosen to take the group 100% virtual to continue supporting every woman in the group with resources, programs and connection opportunities to help their small businesses continue to thrive through the pandemic in every way possible.

In non-COVID times, FemCity Roanoke, like all other chapters across the U.S. and Canada, thrived by offering highly attended events 1-3 times per month. "It's been critical move for us to go completely virtual and continue to serve our thousands of members as a platform here to help women connect, network and build opportunities together," says de Ayala. "While in-person events are something we are all so much looking forward to when the time is right, we are grateful we can continue providing the online programming to help our members still thrive with their creative launches and small businesses in such uncertain times."

As part of the new initiatives included in the membership, FemCity has added: weekly virtual networking for members to participate in, completely free online group coaching and mentorship, plus a live class series with various industry experts every week that can all be accessed through the safety and comfort of a home office.

As the President of the Roanoke Chapter, I've been blown away by the sheer volume of classes, networking and coaching opportunities offered by FemCity. Our local chapter has also continued our 3 monthly events virtually. At a recent meeting, it was noted how no other "Zoom" feels like a FemCity Zoom.

DeAyala offered these five tips for leading through turbulent times during a recent interview with Charlie Katz, published on Medium.

1. Show compassion and empathy
2. Lead with purpose.
3. Give gratitude to others and put them on the stage. When we praise others for the work they have done and we do so in front of others, it motivates, inspires and lifts the work ethic of others.
4. Be a person of your word. Do what you say you will do. This will go a very long way and makes leaders stand out.
5. Think of what more you can do to help your clients. // Go beyond the expectation and the promise you gave even if just a little bit.

Leading in the service of others is the key to getting through difficult times.

Improving stats for CF

At the end of October, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation — Virginia Chapter held its “Virginia’s Finest” campaign celebration and 2020 “Brewers Ball UnTapped” event (re-titled “un-tapped” this year, due to the COVID-response virtual affair) where “Honorees” were recognized from Roanoke, Richmond, Charlottesville, and Hampton Roads in the fundraising and fight for curing CF.

Roanoke Honorees included Kaili Crumpacker (Lucas Paving); Teddy Dalton (Long & Foster); Gray Hamlin (Carter Machinery); Gavin Hollingsworth (Hall Associates); Diane Simmons (Simply Fitness); Brittany Turman (Optum/UnitedHealth); Nathan Webster (Scratch Biscuit); and Ashley Willie (MKB Realtors). (CFF Honorees were featured in the October 2020 edition of FRONT.)

The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation’s mission is to cure cystic fibrosis—a life-threatening genetic disease that affects about 30,000 children and adults in the U.S. (70,000 worldwide). A defective gene and its protein product cause the body to produce unusually thick, sticky mucus that clogs the lungs, leading to infections and obstructing the pancreas which stops natural enzymes from helping the body break down and absorb food. When CFF was established in 1995, most children with CF did not live past elementary school. Due in large part to CFF’s aggressive investments in innovative research and comprehensive care, today, many people with CF are living into their 40s and beyond.

“As a mother of a child with Cystic Fibrosis our mission could not be any closer to my heart,” says Holly Carroll-Owen, the chair of Roanoke’s Brewer’s Ball and Great Stride Committee Member. “The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation has continued to work tirelessly to find better therapies and treatments for this devastating disease. Due to CF being a rare disease and not receiving federal funding, our local events like the Brewer’s Ball and Great Strides Walk have been a great way for us to share our stories. Campaigns like ‘Roanoke’s Finest’ engage our communities and place a spotlight on our local food and beverage industry as well as young professionals in the fight to make CF stand for Cure Found.”

Visit www.cff.org/Virginia for more information or to explore how you can help. 



Holly Elise Carroll-Owen
with sons

GOOD WORK

Executive Summary:
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Leaders in our area have diverse opinions

By Nanette Levin

Leadership perspectives are almost as varied as the backgrounds of those affecting change in Southwest Virginia. Five individuals, some of whom who may not be household names, share their viewpoints.

Amy Ankrum, President & CEO, Qualtrax

"The best part of leadership for me is affecting peoples' lives. Whether it's your team or your customers you're serving, to be able to make a positive impact in people's lives is really rewarding." Amy has been a part of Qualtrax, a compliance management software company headquartered in Blacksburg and founded in 1993, for more than 20 years. She started running the company in 2011 and is a part owner today. She's a VT graduate and proud Hokie.

How do you define leadership? When I think about leadership, and especially from my perspective of leading Qualtrax, it's really been about providing a purpose that people get very excited to be a part of; sharing a path that people are excited to go down with you. A leader for me is someone who doesn't necessarily have all the best ideas, all the right ideas, but is able to put together the right people with the right skill sets to

pursue a common purpose. It's about listening and making sure we're putting our time and investment into the best ideas. I think that's what's allowed us to be so successful.

When did you discover what leadership is? Throughout life, probably the definition of leadership has taken on new meaning for me. My parents had a big impact on what I thought it looked like to take responsibility and have the right core value set. As I spent time in the business world, I've had the opportunity to see different leaders in action and that has helped to mold my view. I've met great leaders to model and leadership I wouldn't want to repeat.

Toni McLawhorn, One-Stop Coordinator at Virginia Career Works – Blue Ridge Region

"I have always been a firm believer that you need to be involved in order to affect leadership and decisions." Toni manages the One-Stop Center in Roanoke and is responsible



Michael Shelton

**Michael Shelton, President & CEO,
360 Wealth Consultants**

"If you remain average, you'll never stand out as a leader." Michael is a leader in the FinTech (Financial Technology) space, disrupting the current status quo for the accounting industry. His company recently launched 360+, which combines cutting-edge AI technology with expert financial professional oversight. He's a Dave Ramsey SmartVestor Pro & ELP for Tax Services. Michael Shelton (also a Valley Business FRONT columnist) is also an Iraqi Freedom Veteran who provided front-line intelligence for the leadership in D.C.

How do you define leadership? Leadership is guided around the ability to influence people to go outside of the norm.

When did you discover what leadership is? In the military. Being around a lot of like-minded people with the same goals and achievements produced a harder environment to stand out. So, it really pushes you to stretch yourself to influence and aid people to do what you think is best.

Are there others you admire out there for leadership skills? Marcus Lemonis, who is the CEO of Camping World. He's a true problem solver. Marcus has the "4 P's" to create success: People, Process, Product and Passion. It lets him – and me, from following his model – quickly determine issues by focusing on those 4 P's. I add bookkeeping reports. That core concept works in every business. It's a lot like Dave Ramsey's 7 baby steps but focused on companies instead of individuals. It's something I love and comes natural to me.

**Beth Doughty, Executive Director,
Roanoke Regional Partnership**

"Leadership is lonely and it's not lonely at the same time. You may be the 'leader' but you're part of a team. You're also lonely in that it's hard to find sympathizers. I really value those who can be my sympathizers." Beth runs the public-private regional economic development organization designed to help create jobs, spur investment, foster talent, and develop our outdoor assets. She'll be retiring in

for resource rooms at the Centers in Covington and Franklin County. She spent 29 years as Director of Career Services at Roanoke College just prior to accepting her new position this year. Virginia Career Works provides job search resources and support for individuals seeking employment. This includes community collaborations and serving as an information hub. Toni's a leader with local chambers, including two recent terms as President of the Salem-Roanoke County Chamber of Commerce. She also serves on several state, regional and national committees & boards.

How do you define leadership? Leaders motivate others to achieve goals. I think you can get a lot more out of things when you are involved as a leader and not just a follower. You can also influence a lot more of the way things go. Having a say in matters makes things happen.

When did you discover what leadership is? That goes back to my teaching days because even when I was a high school teacher, I was on state boards at a very young age. It's mainly because my outlook is "throw yourself in and get involved; the more you get involved the more you're going to get out of something."

Are there others you admire out there for leadership skills? Colleagues, some who are no longer living. For the past five years, probably a dozen have been my mentors. Through their leadership they've challenged me to get involved on a higher level.



Beth Doughty

December from a position she held in the 90s, then came back to in 2008.

How do you define leadership? I define leadership as getting the job done. It takes some skills: the first one is communications, creativity is important, and I also think that compassion is important as well.

When did you discover what leadership is? I don't know that I ever intentionally thought I was a leader or wanted to be a leader in the kind of altruistic sense. I think I thought for most of my career that I was managing a process. I've come to realize that the difference between managing and leading is with leadership you make more of a lasting impression on the process and the people you work with. Not everybody is a leader and I also think there are leaders who don't get the opportunity to lead.

Are there others you admire out there for leadership skills? The best book I ever read was the biography of Steve Jobs. I learned a lot about leadership by that because he combined leadership and creativity; I don't know that he had compassion with it. I'm a big fan of creativity.

Teresa Lyons, Director, Fit Learning Roanoke & Owner, Academics Accelerated

"For me, leaders see possibilities where other people see failure. With disabilities, I see potential where others see deficits." Teresa is a behavioral scientist focused on changing the outcomes of humans and organizational



Teresa Lyons

structures. She believes that if a child is not flourishing, the goal should not be to change the child, but to change the environment. "These kids can flourish and don't need to live with the long-term beliefs that they're not capable of performing no matter their disability or the complexity of the disability," she says.

How do you define leadership? For me leadership is not a moment in time, it's a process of looking at the organization, which includes the individuals, structures, and procedures to understand how they work together to produce valuable products and deliverables. The process encompasses data, training, and working with individuals.

When did you discover what leadership is? My understanding of leadership came out of my training as a behavioral scientist.

Are there others you admire out there for leadership skills? In my field, one of the leaders is Aubrey Daniels. He is a thought leader who's written books on leadership. I admire him because he's not only done the leadership piece but he's also one of the co-owners of the Fit Learning lab, so he's helping with the application of the science of learning at the individual level too.

Whether it's finding the right people, being involved, influencing change, getting the job done, or pursuing a process over time, leaders in various fields in our area employ different tactics to reach goals. What they share is a passion for the industries they support and the community they call home. 

Welcome home



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ON TAP FROM THE PUB

By Tom Field

Executive Summary:
"Leadership" generally refers to a positive relationship; but there's certainly bad leadership, too (you probably know one or two, right?).

Bad leader

Gene, my pal and my editor informed me that we're getting a lot of people to contribute their ideas about leadership for this special edition of FRONT. I'm not sure if there was a directive in that observation or a subtle suggestion, but I feel a little more than compelled to weigh in.

Except we already have a good group of guys and gals sharing what constitutes leadership. Many of the characteristics shared are the same I've experienced with leaders I've met.

So, I'll flip the assignment a tad. Leave it to me to ruin the positive vibe we set throughout the rest of this magazine... Here's my take on what we should NOT look for in a leader. You might guess I'm talking about "leaders" with whom I've had the pleasure of association. You'd be correct.

"Just get it done."

It's often pointed out that a good leader doesn't micromanage. However, when you have a young or new employee, a reasonable degree of instruction shouldn't be ignored. I'm pretty good at figuring things out and getting work completed in an effective if not exceptional fashion. But when I was in a junior graphics production role once, I ran metal signs through a dryer that turned out to be set at a too-high temperature (or too-slow conveyor). No one told (or showed) me anything about the equipment. I didn't know—and I only learned how not to do something... the hard way. In this case, all it would have taken to avoid ruined inventory was about ONE MINUTE of instruction from the "leader."

"Fire her."

More than once, I was hired for a management position where my first tasks included firing the staff. One leader waited until my first week on the job was winding down, then ordered me to terminate a person he didn't like. Sometimes, the implication is that leadership means getting rid of underperformers (or, more accurately, payroll). If I didn't already step into a volatile environment, the "leader" here had no problem creating one. If you're going to call in someone to be the hatchet, at least have the decency to include that expectation before offering the position.

"What needs to be done?"

Probably my least favorite "leader" is the person in charge who asks for expertise, ideas, or actions that will improve

continued on Page 43

You can learn a lot about leadership from what you read

Other than an annual sojourn or two to the beach every year for a longish weekend of reading, I'm mostly a crawl into bed and read for 20-30 minutes almost every night type of person; almost always non-fiction, lots of biographies. Presidents, war time, some business types are a big focus. Here's just a few of the tidbits I've picked up over the years. In *Steve Jobs* by Walter Isaacson, the author talks about the late Apple co-founder as being "driven by demons ... Jobs could drive those around him to fury and despair. But his personality and products were interrelated." Isaacson calls Jobs' tale "instructive and cautionary, filled with lessons about innovation, character, leadership and values." Seems like it all worked out for the Apple empire.

As a former longtime veteran of small manufacturing companies, I'm a big fan of Roanoke author Beth Macy's first book, *Factory Man*, which began as a newspaper story. It describes the battle for the Bassett Furniture Company in Southwestern Virginia, at one time the world's biggest wood furniture manufacturer. Then came cheap imports starting in the 80's – even forcing Bassett to move much of its production to China to stay price competitive. But a third-generation factory man, John "JB" Bassett III fought back, using "grit, tenacity and will to compete against China and ultimately save his family's company." In *Factory Man*, JB III stays light on his feet, changes direction and the product mix as needed to stay relevant in the furniture market. Legal maneuvers, factory efficiencies and "sheer will" saved hundreds of jobs. Anyone in an industry where the competition is cutthroat will appreciate Bassett's leadership skills in this – for me anyway – page turner of a tale.

In *Team of Rivals*, Doris Kearns Goodwin writes about a President-elect Abraham Lincoln was so secure in his leadership skills and his ability to shape a consensus that he enlisted a cabinet full of talented people who aspired to be president themselves or thought they were smarter. Unlike some presidents – or business leaders - Lincoln chose not to micromanage. Finally *Washington: A Life*, the 2010 biography of the nation's first president written by former business journalist Ron Chernow (he also penned *Alexander Hamilton* – another good leadership tale about the man who helped design our central banking system) describes George Washington as the right man in the right place at the right time. Already revered as a Revolutionary war hero, Washington had an innate sense of leadership, a man who could seem laconic and unemotional on the outside, but one who was "a passionate man of fiery opinions, with "canny political genius who knew how to inspire people." You can learn a lot about leadership from what you read. 📖



THERE'S SOMETHING HAPPENING HERE

By Gene Marrano

Executive Summary:
What I've picked up from my bedtime reading habits about leadership.



GUEST COMMENTARY

By Dr. Kay Dunkley

Executive Summary:
RHEC's director shares her pivoting over this past year.

Plan to replan

The pandemic has changed life at home and at work and has tested me in many ways I never thought would happen. It is difficult to find words to describe how COVID-19 has affected me as a leader at the Roanoke Higher Education Center, but I have learned some valuable lessons during these challenging times.

- It is okay to have a plan, but understand you may have to shift course and “fly by the seat of your pants,” is an apt aviation saying for a pandemic. We have to adjust to the situations at hand and make decisions as things occur.
- Give grace to others by showing empathy, compassion, and understanding. We are in this situation together no matter our age, ethnicity, or income level. The world is suffering, and this pandemic is overwhelming to us all.
- Expect the unexpected. As an individual who likes to plan, organize, and think ahead, COVID has taught me to pivot. I am learning how to give myself permission to do the best I can knowing it may not be perfect.
- Forge ahead. How do I help others adjust to change when it is hard for me? My actions show my vulnerability, but it also demonstrates I am human.
- Collect feedback. We asked the RHEC staff to reply to a “well-being survey.” Questions on a 5-point scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” included: “I generally have positive feelings about my work,” “My current levels of stress feel manageable,” and “What is one thing RHEC can do to better support your well-being?” The survey’s results helped the executive team better understand how we could lend support. Gaining employees’ trust is vital. Thankfully, our budget has allowed us to not lay off employees, and our remote work schedules have proven effective.
- No matter the situation, use your moral compass to map out your flight plan. We are dealing with a new normal, but we still need to focus on making good decisions. The heart discovers the words the brain needs to put into action, and I aim to lead with fairness and integrity. 📌

Dr. Kay Dunkley is the executive director of the Roanoke Higher Education Center. An overview and descriptions RHEC programs can be reviewed at www.education.edu or you can call 540-767-6007 for more information. [kay.dunkley@education.edu]

Letters

Leaders inspire

If you're in leadership for the power and prestige, please step aside, because your time has passed. Today's best leaders listen intently, serve those around them, and enable people to achieve great things without consideration for who gets the credit.

In my leadership journey over the last 20+ years, one of my biggest points of pride has been seeing former employees advance to

become leaders in their own right—some as senior managers and executives, others as entrepreneurs and business owners. I've been blessed to work with so many talented and hard-working individuals; they are largely responsible for any success I've had. That's why I've never taken it personally when someone left my team to spread their wings in new ways. My hope is that our time together helped them in their journey, and that they will return the favor to those they lead.

Mike Dame
Roanoke

Send us your feedback in a letter with name and where you live—good or bad: news@vbfront.com

Field / On Tap

from Page 40

results—and then keeps everything the same. Don't ask for suggestions if you never really ever intended to take them. Such a ploy is disrespectful and ultimately damaging to the workplace and mission. Nothing takes the heart out of a person striving to perform than a "leader" who doesn't value the input. The best way to sabotage morale is to devalue contribution. I've had "leaders" who wasted hours,

weeks, or months of work only to leave it all incomplete; "leaders" who sidelined my department with activities that took all of us from essential operations; and "leaders" who ignored new, promising and proven methods just to preserve their tired, old kingdoms. Doing those things, is the opposite of leadership.

I hope you get to associate with good leaders (like I have). May the bad leaders you're sure to encounter be far and few between. 🍷

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FRONTReviews >

Readers and patrons of the business journal are invited to submit reviews (along with an optional photo) to news@vbFRONT.com. We've expanded our reviews to include books, music, art, performances, culinary—with a preference for local productions. Reviews must be original, include the author's name and location, and should be brief, under 350 words.



An easy ride

Attend a festival around here (yeah, remember those?) or hit up the local brewery circuit, and sooner or later you're sure to run into Blue Mule. Not a farm animal or a drink (though one could easily craft such a concoction), the Blue Mule band is usually five guys who've played enough spaces and years together to create a tight sound. Most fans start with the appreciation of their bluegrass—but the Mule flat foots on over to genres as diverse as jazz, rock, blues, and country.

It's a good-feel, dance-attracting, easy sip-n-listen kind of jive you can enjoy in any setting. Played with such a smooth acoustic group form, listeners might not even notice how perfectly it's delivered. They'll just keep tapping toes. Like just about EVERY other local band, the website hardly keeps up with the current schedule; so just follow on social media or take your chances running into the likeable guys at your next venue or gathering. It's the easiest, enjoyable way to ride.

—Tom Field

Keeping it in the family

Family businesses are unique in their close connections and shared trust. But children of the founders need to be able to make their own way into the business, and that includes learning, and working, outside the company

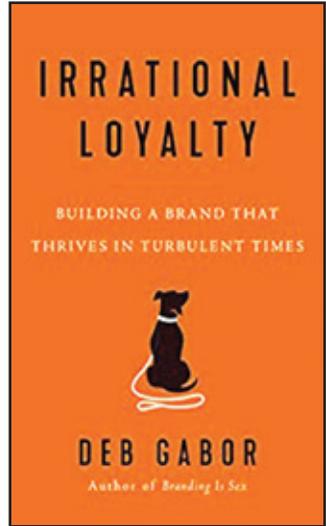
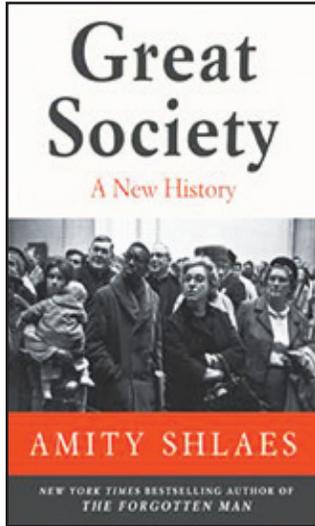
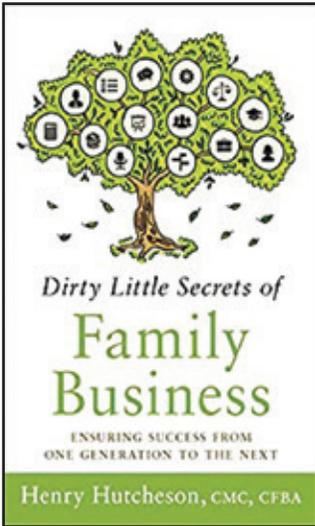
walls. Seventy percent of all businesses are family businesses in the United States, but only two thirds survive past the first generation. For too many family businesses, while it may be a given that children will become the next leaders, they don't receive the preparation or training to succeed.

In *Dirty Little Secrets of Family Business (3rd edition): Ensuring Success from One Generation to the Next* (Greenleaf: 2016) family business expert Henry Hutcheson offers any organization the roadmap to ensure succession and prevent failures. He debunks the myths of family businesses and illuminates the best practices — to take a family business from startup to a well-established, long-standing company.

—David Lewis

Great Society—or colossal failure?

It's an argument we all just lived through — again — during last month's presidential election: the merits of pure capitalism versus economic redistribution and even socialism. Do government funded programs to lift people up, to place them in "better" public housing for example, to create back to work programs for those on public assistance — does any of that work in the long run? It's obvious that bestselling author Amity Shlaes is not a big fan of public sector reforms, at least its history, in *Great Society: A New History* (Harper Collins, 2019). Shlaes wrote *Coolidge* (an excellent history) and



the bestseller *The Forgotten Man* and wrote a syndicated column for many years.

In *Great Society* she also looks at the impact powerful unions had in the 60's and 70's, and doesn't let either major party or their presidents – Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon for example – off the hook for public sector programs that threw lots of taxpayer's money at programs she writes did not cure the nation of poverty but instead tethered millions of families into sometimes generational and permanent government dependence. Supporters of such programs may be irritated by the author's obvious disapproval of such well-meaning initiatives but *Great Society* is a serious, detailed read for those that may ponder the question – is there a better way to lift those up at the lower socio-economic ladder? Why hasn't anything seemed to work all that well so far? Or have those programs been more effective perhaps than Shlaes gives them credit for?

—Gene Marrano

Following through thick and thin

Eventually, every organization faces a serious branding disaster. Think of United Airlines, Wells Fargo, Uber and other companies whose tribulations made front page news. Poor business decisions, corrupt cultures or just plain bad luck can lead to major PR meltdowns, sending once-loyal consumers fleeing in droves. But there's a right way to handle controversy

and come out stronger on the other side.

In *Irrational Loyalty: Building a Brand That Thrives in Turbulent Times* (Lioncrest; 2019), Deb Gabor, brand strategist and CEO of Sol Marketing takes an in-depth look at how the world's largest companies bounce back in the wake of broken promises and bad headlines. She takes what she's learned from experience and combines it with stories of how some of the world's best-known companies have handled their worst branding disasters to give you the ultimate recipe for making your personal or corporate brand tough enough to weather any storm. The book shows why brands need to show up with a set of beliefs and values that can serve as a magnet to attract the kinds of customers they want and need to grow; how crises created by companies' own leadership, culture and ignorance have damaged their reputations; how the best brands in the world survive brand disasters; and how companies of any size in any market can construct advertising, branding and marketing to drive "irrational loyalty" and more.

—Erin MacDonald-Birnbaum

The reviewers: **Tom Field** publishes FRONT and is a creative director; **David Lewis** is a publicist with CS Lewis in Woodstock, NY; **Gene Marrano** is editor of FRONT and an award-winning news reporter; **Erin MacDonald-Birnbaum** is a publicist Smith Publicity in Cherry Hill, NJ.

New water tower serves several purposes >

The **Western Virginia Water Authority** has erected a 102-foot-tall, 500,000-gallon tank that will provide water to the new Summit View Business Park under development and surrounding residential areas. It's also acting as a billboard for those passing by on US 220 between Boones Mill and Rocky Mount: southbound motorists will see the Franklin County



logo, while northbound (heading towards Roanoke) the **Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge** graphic is featured. Said Franklin County Administrator and Visit VBR Board member **Chris Whitlow**, "the water tank project is a prime example of the ongoing partnership between Franklin County and Visit VBR to increase awareness of the many opportunities that exist in the County and region for people to visit, play, and invest in Virginia's Blue Ridge."

Local craft brewer recognized >

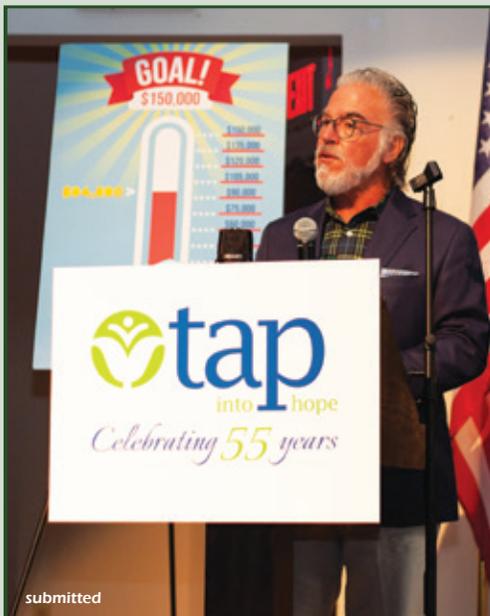
Beale's Beer in Bedford received the Bronze Medal at the 2020 Great American Beer Festival. Plumpricot, a traditional Berliner Weisse brewed with all-natural plums and apricots, took home the Bronze Specialty Berliner-Style Weisse beer style category at the virtual ceremony on October 16, hosted on The Brewing Network. "Winning this medal in 2020, a year filled with



uncertainty and challenges for our business, is incredibly meaningful to us. Our brewers are committed to producing top-quality beer, and we're thrilled to see that hard work recognized on a national stage," said V P of Operations, **Emily Sanfratella**. Beale's operates a 30-barrel system and a taproom in the Town of Bedford. Another taproom in Yorktown, VA is slated for 2021. Beale's distributes its beer throughout Virginia and Washington, D.C. (pictured:) Beale's brewers from left to right: **Chris Sharrett, Bryson Foutz, and Seth Johnson** celebrate the GABF award.

Explore Park picks up the pace >

A kayaker floats the Roanoke River below the Niagara Dam as he checks out the fall colors. The **Roanoke County Parks, Recreation and Tourism** venue was a busier place this past year with camping, aerial adventures (Treetop Quest), tubing rentals and a Twin Creeks brewpub in operation. It's all part of a developing plan to turn the former history park into a true regional destination.



Bringing Hope Home >

Total Action for Progress has launched its Bringing Hope Home campaign, with a goal of raising at least \$150,000 by next June 30 for its social service programs that address education, domestic violence, housing and other issues for the region's lower income households. TAP board president Craig Balzer (pictured) of Balzer & Associates announced in late October that corporate donation had already chipped in with close to \$95,000 towards that goal. The Bringing Hope Home launch announcement was made at the Dumas Center, which designers/architects at Balzer & Associates took the lead on during renovations there two decades ago.

Socially distanced music >

With the official **Go Fest** event canceled in Roanoke due to pandemic (the outdoors extravaganza typically draws 30,000 or more now) the spirit of the event was kept alive by two concerts featuring Andy Frasco & the U.N. at the Rivers Edge Sports Complex. Ticket holders had to purchase a "pod" that could hold up to six people, in socially distanced seating areas marked off with ribbon and flagging. The concerts were also a fundraiser for Project Outside, which looks to raise \$100,000 or more, largely for upkeep at outdoor amenities getting more use perhaps than ever these days due to the impact of COVID-19. The **Roanoke Outside Foundation** is the driving force behind Project Outside.





LDS steps up again >

The Salem Distribution Center for **Feeding Southwest Virginia** received 20,000 lbs. of Food for the annual "Day of Service" donation from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. This is the 3rd shipment received from the church (followers are also known as Mormons) in 2020 - for a grand total of

112,746 lbs. – the largest annual donation from the church in the 11-year relationship with Feeding Southwest Virginia. Salem Mayor **Renee Turk**, Feeding America President and CEO **Pamela Irvine**, local Congressmen (**Ben Cline**, **Morgan Griffith**) all helped present church Elder J. Matthew Scott with a certificate of appreciation for the donations in October. This latest shipment arrived after a 33-hour road trip from the Salt Lake City area, where some of the donations came from food produced on church-owned farms.

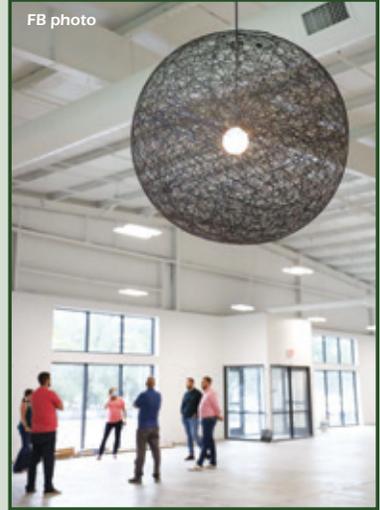


FBRI filling addition to Roanoke Center >

The new wing at the **Fralin Biomedical Research Institute** on the Virginia Tech-Carilion campus in Roanoke is still adding teams to its roster. The **Virginia Tech Animal Cancer Care and Research Center** moved in several months ago (from a smaller space in Blacksburg.) **Dr Joanne Touhy** is the interim director: "radiation therapy, surgery for our patients, medical oncology care which includes chemotherapy and other-directed therapies." Touhy said during a media event that because dogs and people share some genetic traits what is learned from treating canines can often be applied to cancer research in humans.

Office furniture company expands >

Barrows has cut the ribbon on a new showroom at 3801 Blue Ridge Drive in Roanoke. The business environment specialist (office furniture, accessories, business flooring etc.) has been established in the Roanoke Valley for over 30 years. CEO **Chris Clemmer** says the new showroom, "has been intentionally designed to model unique and creative solutions that Roanoke Valley businesses have never seen before. Barrows designed the new showroom to aid in social distancing, so that employees could return to the office safely. We're excited to show Roanoke how Barrows is moving forward in the 'new normal,'" says Clemmer.



FB photo



VTC photo

FBRI will analyze more COVID test samples >

Since this summer, the Virginia Tech lab at the **Fralin Biomedical Research Institute** has been analyzing COVID-19 test samples for several local health districts, helping to relieve the backlog crunch. Now Tech is going statewide after being selected as one of three "OneLab Network Tier 2" laboratories. It means the Fralin Institute can accept samples from any health district as needed. **Dr. Carla Finkielstein** helps run the lab program: "whatever we [determine] here may affect someone's life. We need to be 100 percent sure that our 'calls' are correct. Another requirement that's important is the humanity. I really want people here [at the FBRI] that realize what we are doing is tremendously useful for our community." Under the new agreement the university's lab in Roanoke will process up to 600 COVID tests per day, 7 days a week. Virginia Tech also will be reimbursed 100 dollars per test for the next year.

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

LEGAL FRONT



Brown

Gentry Locke announces that **Hugh H. Brown** has joined the firm's Roanoke office as an associate in the firm's business and commercial law practice. Brown assists clients with the financing, including credit facilities, syndicated and bilateral loans, accounts receivable monetization, and collateralized loan obligations. He earned his J.D. from the Washington and Lee University School of Law, where he served as managing online editor for the Washington & Lee Law Review.

FINANCIAL FRONT

Brown Edwards & Company, LLP, a Top 100 accounting firm

based in Roanoke, announces that **Beth Schulhof** has joined the firm as a Tax Credit Specialist in the Richmond office. She began her career with a national public accounting firm and subsequently joined a predecessor to Bank of America in commercial lending. After 15 years, she returned to public accounting specializing in various financial incentives for real estate development firms. Today she focuses on Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit programs and the Virginia Enterprise Zone program.



Hayes

Freedom First Credit Union announced that **VaLinda Hayes** has joined the Freedom First Mortgage Team, serving homebuyers in the Roanoke and New River Valleys. "VaLinda has more than fifteen

years of experience in the mortgage industry," Senior Vice President Mortgage Paula Brown.

EDUCATIONAL FRONT

Jonathan Porter has been named associate vice president and executive director of research development in the Office of Strategic Alliances at Virginia Tech. Porter will work with university leadership, faculty and staff, in the D.C. region and Blacksburg, to develop strategic collaboration and partnerships with federal agencies and laboratories, other academic institutions, and Washington, D.C., area-based associations and business groups. Prior to joining Virginia Tech, Porter served as chief scientist in the Federal Highway Administration's Office of Research, Development and Technology within the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Entrepreneur and Virginia Tech professor **Jeffrey H. Reed** has joined the



Reed

Commonwealth Cyber Initiative (CCI) leadership team as its inaugural chief technology officer. CCI is described as "a network of higher education and industry experts created to build an ecosystem of cyber-related research, innovation, and workforce development." The goal is to solve cybersecurity challenges "that will position the state as a world leader in cybersecurity and cyber-physical systems."



Tomlin

Patrick Tomlin has been appointed University Libraries assistant dean and

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director of learning environments at Virginia Tech. Reporting to the dean of University Libraries, his areas of responsibility include building management, capital outlay planning and renovations, exhibits, special events, studios and innovative technologies, user services, the art and architecture library, the northern Virginia resource center, and the future Innovation Campus library. Tomlin began working in the University Libraries at Virginia Tech in 2008.

WELLNESS FRONT

Health Corporation (U Health) has announced its newest team member, **Walter Curtis Hodges**, DNP, FNP-C, BSN. Hodges brings extensive nursing experience to U Health facilities in Roanoke and the New River Valley. In addition to also supporting the Danville and Martinsville centers, he will play a role in U Health's expansion in telehealth services. Hodges

Have a career announcement?

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earned his Doctor of Nursing Practice from Radford University; he holds bachelor's degrees in nursing and biology from East Carolina University. Hodges joins U Health with ten years of experience as a registered nurse at LewisGale Medical Center in Salem.



Tyson

Carilion Clinic has announced **Charlotte C. Tyson** as Vice President of Hospital Operations. In this role, she oversees Guest and Volunteer Services, also acting a clinical liaison for expansion

and renovation projects and other organizational priorities. Tyson has worked in health care for more than three decades with HCA – LewisGale Regional Health System, starting her career as a nurse and most recently serving as Market Chief Operating Officer.

SENIOR FRONT



Waggy

Roanoke-based Retirement Unlimited, Inc. (RUI), a senior living community management company established in 1984,



Schroeder

has named **Amanda Waggy** and **Alissa Schroeder** as Senior Directors of Sales and Business Development for the northern Virginia region. Waggy has been with RUI since 2016 as Director of Marketing and Community Relations for several northern Virginia communities. Schroeder has been with RUI since 2017 as Director of Marketing and Community Relations for several NOVA communities. Owned and operated by the Fralin and Waldon families, RUI currently has 10 senior living



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communities throughout Virginia and several active development projects.



Winningham

Retirement Unlimited, Inc. (RUI), has named **Matt Winningham** as Regional Director of Plant Operations, responsible for supervising plant operation objectives including the grounds, utilities, and restoration/renovation projects. Winningham also oversees new construction. The US army veteran has been with Roanoke-based RUI for four years, holding multiple positions in plant operations and community project management.



Evans

Friendship Health has announced the promotion of **Brandon Evans** from administrator to executive director of healthcare services. "Brandon has been integral at our south campus in increasing the care quality and

enhancing our company culture," said President and CEO Joe Hoff. Evans joined Friendship in 2018 as administrator for Friendship Health and Rehab Center South (FHRC South) in southwest Roanoke County.



Hartman

Richfield Living has announced that **Scotti Hartman**, Director of Community and Development, has earned the designation of Certified Fund Raising Executive, an internationally recognized certification indicating excellence in fundraising ethics and professionalism. She is among only a handful of CFREs in southwest Virginia. Hartman is a graduate of Roanoke College with a Bachelor's of Sociology and The Management Institute, and has been with Richfield for 25 years

REAL ESTATE FRONT

Roanoke native **Derek T. Hicks** has joined Waldvogel Commercial Properties, Inc. as a sales and leasing agent. Hicks comes to Waldvogel with over 16 years of experience in the Roanoke Valley,



Hicks

including commercial portfolio management. He will work with local business owners in acquisition and disposition of business and investment property.

MUNICIPAL FRONT

Cynthia Lawrence from Carilion Clinic (Strategic and Education Partnerships) has been appointed to the Virginia Lottery Board by Governor Ralph Northam.



Cash

New River Community College faculty member **Dr. Emily Paige Cash** was recently appointed by Governor Ralph Northam to serve on the Virginia Behavioral Health and Developmental Services Board for a four-year-term. Cash is a professor of English at NRCC. The VBHDS Board is a policymaking body

consisting of nine non-legislative citizen members appointed by the governor and confirmed by Virginia General Assembly



Ramsburg

The new director for Roanoke Valley Television – RVTV – is **Scott Ramsburg**, who has succeeded recently retired Elaine Bays-Murphy. RVTV is funded by local governments, broadcasting public meetings live and producing other programs highlighting various departments. Ramsburg moves over from Roanoke Parks, Recreation and Tourism (RVTV employees are on the Roanoke County payroll). When he was introduced at a Roanoke City Council meeting, he spoke of getting more information out to the public on a variety of digital platforms as one goal. Ramsburg is also a talented musician and a budding playwright. "[We] will strive to be responsible to our citizens [and plan] to expand our scope of services," he told Roanoke City Council.

*Compiled by
Gene Marrano*



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CONTRIBUTORS

Beth Bell is the president of FemCity Roanoke, a 300-member business networking community for women. [Roanoke@femcity.com]

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Tim Bradshaw is the executive director for the Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport. A native of Roanoke who returned to the area in 2014, Tim has an Aviation BA degree from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and a Master's in Public Administration from Western Kentucky University. He lives in Troutville on a small farm with his wife Janee. His daughter Jessica and son-in-law Matt reside in Roanoke. Tim is an avid outdoorsman.

Lisa Clause is senior director of marketing and philanthropy at Richfield Living. She is a recent MBA graduate with distinction of Liberty University and has a bachelor's degree in marketing and minor in professional and technical writing at Virginia Tech. She began her career at the Roanoke Times, moved to WSET television rising to national sales manager. She co-owns Fine Line Interiors with her husband, and enjoys gardening, bike riding, and church activities.

Jennifer Poff Cooper is a senior correspondent for FRONT, and a graduate of the RB Pamplin College of Business at Virginia Tech with a Master of Arts in Liberal Studies from Hollins University. She is a native of Christiansburg, where she lives and writes in her family's home place. [cooperjpp91@gmail.com]

Mike Dame is the vice president of marketing and communications at Carilion Clinic. A graduate of the University of Florida, he spent nearly a decade as a sportswriter for the Orlando Sentinel before transitioning to a career in digital communications that landed him at Virginia Tech in 2005; he joined Carilion in 2008. Mike lives in Roanoke with his wife Valeria and enjoys golf, guitar, spending time

with friends and cheering on his beloved Florida Gators.

Dan Dowdy is the business development director for Valley Business FRONT and owner of The Proofing Prof proofreading services (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]

Dr. Kay Dunkley is the executive director of the Roanoke Higher Education Center. An overview and descriptions RHEC programs can be reviewed at www.education.edu or you can call 540-767-6007 for more information. [kay.dunkley@education.edu]

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 40 years. [tfield@berryfield.com]

Katie Gehrt is the director of marketing and communications for the Moss Arts Center and the Center for Creativity, Arts, and Technology at Virginia Tech. She holds degrees from Virginia Tech and West Virginia University. She's an avid equestrian who loves to travel and lives in Blacksburg with her husband and potcake dog.

Lois James has 28+ years business and management experience in the financial, customer service, and healthcare industries. Most recently before joining OpX Solutions James spent 14 years in the senior healthcare industry locally, holding various leadership and management positions.

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@

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Nanette Levin is a senior correspondent for FRONT business journal and the Wordsmith of Roanoke. When she's not creating marketing copy for owners of B2B and B2C professional services firms or ghostwriting & editing books for non-fiction authors, she's trying to get control of her talented, always happy, but easily distracted mutt Morrie on the agility field. [Nanette@WordsmithofRoanoke.com]

Gene Marrano is FRONT 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]

Frank Martin is a senior associate broker and the top sales agent for Hall Associates, Inc., the oldest commercial real estate brokerage west of Richmond. He specializes in Sales and Leasing for office and industrial properties in southwest Virginia.

Mary Ann L. Miller is vice president of business banking and community relations at Bank of Botetourt. A graduate of Bridgewater College, she has been in the banking industry for more than fifteen years and currently serves on the board and executive committee as past-president with the Botetourt County Chamber of Commerce, a board member with the Daleville Institute, and is vice chair of the board of with the Botetourt Family YMCA. A native of Botetourt County, she resides in Daleville with her husband, Matthew and their son Ira.

Annette Patterson, President of the Advancement Foundation in Vinton, is a results-driven leader that has built a massive network of support services, resources, and collaborations to benefit main street, early high growth ventures and freelancers. [annette.taf@gmail.com]

Paul Phillips has served as the chief executive officer of Freedom First Credit Union for the last twenty years. Freedom First was chartered in 1956 as a federally-insured

member-owned financial cooperative and currently serves residents and businesses through its ten locations in the Roanoke and New River valleys. Prior to moving to Roanoke in 1998 Paul and his wife Missy lived in Cheyenne, Wyoming with their three children. A resident of Fincastle, Paul enjoys numerous outdoor activities, travelling and spending time with his two granddaughters.

Brian Powell is the owner and operator of Wine Gourmet in Roanoke Virginia. Brian moved to Roanoke when he purchased Wine Gourmet in 2011. Brian attended Virginia Tech and is an avid Hokie Fan! A member of the Guild of Sommoliers, Brian resides in Roanoke and enjoys time with family and friends.

Michael Shelton is a Registered Financial Consultant, tax specialist, and owner of 360 Wealth Consultants. His firm specializes in providing retirement planning and wealth preservation strategies for business owners and astute individuals. What really has the locals excited, though, is his groundbreaking, proprietary software, designed to streamline accounting and wealth planning for business owners of medical practices, real estate properties, and construction industry businesses. [michael@discover360Financial.com]

Nicholas Vaassen is a graphic designer with 19 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]

Amy White is the Dean of STEM (School of Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) at Virginia Western Community College. She has a Bachelor's degree in biology from James Madison University, a Master's degree in microbiology and immunology from Virginia Commonwealth University, hails from Botetourt County, and has worked at VWCC since 2003.



I want to give back what I got. — Page 25

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If a child is not flourishing, the goal should not be to change the child, but to change the environment. — Page 38

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New statewide restrictions due to COVID-19 spikes

As the Commonwealth, the country and the world anxiously await the widespread distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, an uptick in Virginia positive coronavirus cases led **Governor Ralph Northam** to impose new statewide measures as of mid-November. Among them, all public and private gathering sizes was reduced from 250 maximum to 25 – indoor or outdoor - a move that will impact many businesses. Strengthened enforcement of the facemask mandate at essential retail businesses – with violations now a Class One misdemeanor, enforceable through the Virginia Department of Health. All Virginians 5 years of age and over now must wear masks in indoor public places. All sales and consumption of alcohol is now prohibited (as of press time, at end of November) after 10pm, and all dining establishments must now close by midnight. “Virginia is in a much better place than most other states said Northam ... but across Virginia coronavirus cases are on the rise.” Other state had enacted similar or even more severe lockdowns by mid-November.

SML commercial

The **Smith Mountain Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce** has released a new commercial aimed at promoting the region as a tourist destination.

Production of the 30-second commercial was funded with a grant from the Virginia Tourism Corporation, a number of which were awarded in July to help destination marketing organizations impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic to fund recovery marketing initiatives. Says Executive Director Christopher Finley, “on-water recreation activities, golf, wineries, dining and other off-water experiences are all highlighted along with regional historic locations such as the National D-Day Memorial and Booker T. Washington National Monument.” The project was produced by Next Generation Designs, a marketing firm headquartered at Westlake Corner. It will be broadcast on regional market television stations, and on social media platforms like YouTube and Facebook.

Funds to help buildings go greener in Roanoke

Roanoke City Council has approved an ordinance that enables **Commercial Property Clean Energy (C-PACE)** financing in the city, a loan program specifically for energy efficiency and clean energy projects in new construction or renovations. Qualifying projects include energy efficiency resiliency improvements, water efficiency, and/or stormwater management improvements. C-PACE is a commercial loan available for large projects, small businesses and non-profits says the city. All commercial property owners may participate,

except owners of residential dwellings with fewer than five dwelling units and owners of condominium projects.

Vue breaks ground

Investors broke ground in mid-October at the future site of **The Vue**, a housing complex in Blacksburg which will be located a short distance from Virginia Tech’s Corporate Research Center. The community will be made up of 207 units with a mix of one- to three-bedroom apartments, targeted towards young professionals, graduate students and families. The Vue will have luxury amenities like a pool, yoga lawn and a gym and is expected to be complete in about two years. SAS Builders in Blacksburg (profiled here last month) is the general contractor.

Big Boost for Boys & Girls Clubs

Boys & Girls Clubs of Southwest Virginia has announced a \$100,000 scholarship endowment fund targeted for graduating high school students who attend local Boys & Girls Clubs. CEO Michelle Davis says the scholarship idea has been on the wish list for over a decade - and its one way to reward hard-working youth in the afterschool program. “This scholarship fund is going to be available for kids that are going to a four-year school, a two-year school or who are interested in trades and other education [opportunities], and will

be available for kids who have educational needs post-high school,” said Davis. The Jim Barker Scholarship Fund is named for the Delta Dental of Virginia Chief Financial Officer, who attended a Bristol Boys & Girls Club as a youth. There was already more than \$63,000 raised for that scholarship fund in mid-October, with a goal of raising the remainder by the end of the year. Former Delta Dental CEO Mike Wise and his wife Danielle got it rolling with a \$50,000 gift.

RVBA looks like foresight now

With many still teleworking and children remote learning as well, the need for more expansive high-speed internet broadband coverage has been in the spotlight for months. 100-plus miles of fiber optic cable that can carry high speed data and internet - a trunk line - has already been funded and installed underground in the Roanoke area. Frank Smith is President and CEO for the **Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority** “it’s just driven home the importance of why we are here and what are mission is.” Smith is also excited about what two new RVBA board members will bring to the table - Carilion Clinic Senior Vice President and Chief Information officer Keith Perry, and Scott Midkiff, the Vice President for VT and the CIO at Virginia Tech: “the expertise they bring ... for helping to bring additional depths of understanding to

wireless technology and fiber optic engineering is tremendous." Smith also says what they wanted to see happen is - private "last mile" internet providers looking to connect from the 100 mile-plus trunk line to new customers seeking higher speed connectivity.

V3 hits target

Governor Ralph Northam announced in late October that that more than 67,000 Virginia military veterans had been hired through the **Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program** since its inception in 2012, surpassing a goal he set of 65,000 V3 hires by the end of his administration. "Even in this time of economic uncertainty, we know that maximizing the effectiveness of programs like this one benefits everyone," said Northam. The Governor's office said Virginia was the first state in the nation to create an official program dedicated to helping military veterans, transitioning service

members, and their spouses find employment in the civilian workforce.

More recognition for region's outdoor amenities

The readers of Blue Ridge Outdoors magazine have once again chosen Roanoke as the **Top Adventure Town** in the large town category - besting such well known outdoor destinations as Chattanooga and Asheville. 2020 is the 5th time in 9 years that Blue Ridge Outdoors magazine readers have voted Roanoke a Top Adventure Town. Floyd won this year in the Tiny Town category and Bedford took home the Small Adventure Town honors. Catherine Fox is Vice President of Public Affairs and Destination Development for Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge: "it's exciting ... it says a lot about the people who love this area and voted for Roanoke." Fox also says having outdoor amenities was perhaps more important this year than ever as people

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sought safe spaces to recreate.

Making STEM more inclusive

Virginia Tech has been selected as one of only 19 universities nationwide to join a three-year effort designed to further develop inclusive faculty recruitment, hiring, and retention practices. The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) co-leads the effort, The National Science Foundation funds the effort as part of its INCLUDES initiative. A 2019 analysis revealed that underrepresented minority faculty accounted for just 9 percent of professorships in STEM fields at

four-year institutions. Other research shows when underrepresented students are taught by diverse faculty members they achieve at significantly higher rates.

Rebuild VA widens scope

The **"Rebuild Virginia Grant Fund"** designed to help businesses get back on their feet after the impacts of COVID-19 is now available to more smaller firms and non-profits. The 70-million-dollar economic recovery fund was launched in August. See roanokessmallbusiness.org for more information and to apply for a Rebuild Virginia grant. Tom Tanner with the Roanoke Regional Small Business



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Development Center describes some of the changes - prompted in part by all of the ineligible applications received for the first round of grants: "you can now have 250 employees or less [and qualify], and you can be doing ten million dollars in revenue or less [annually]. You do have to be operating since prior to March 12, 2020."

Turning up the heat

The **Town of Blacksburg** is looking to help local businesses to keep their outdoor dining options going longer into the winter months by setting up a grant program to help businesses to pay for things like gas-fired heaters and tents, so they can be creative in order to keep their operations going. More specifics on the grant program were released last month

Global agreement for Christiansburg company

Avila Herbals, which specializes in novel botanical extraction techniques for dietary supplements and pharmaceuticals, has signed an exclusive global manufacturing agreement and a research and development agreement with Phoenix Biotechnology (San Antonio, TX), a company involved with the health-related benefits of novel extracts of Nerium oleander for the past 25 years. Avila Herbals began product development activities in the spring of 2020 and optimized several different proprietary

extraction techniques, also investing (with partners) over \$4.5 million dollars into the development and commercialization of these products. Since spring 2020 Avila has also created more than 50 full-time jobs. "The company's research and development of the potential health benefits of the extract of Nerium oleander is impressive ... we thank Avila and Phoenix for their commitment to the region and to the Commonwealth," says US Congressman Morgan Griffith.

A Dickens of a difference this holiday season in downtown Roanoke

The pandemic means the annual three Friday nights in downtown Roanoke designed to draw visitors to revel in the Christmas season – and to spend money to spend money at local shops and restaurants – will be different this year. The city's Christmas Tree lighting will also be televised; there's no parade, pet costume contest, street carolers in Victorian garb, horse-and-buggy rides etc. Instead merchants will decorate and light up their shops (downtown streets also will be lit up), there will be specials deals and it's now the "**25 Days of Dickens**" that began in late November. Jaime Clark is with Downtown Roanoke Inc., which created Dickens of a Christmas: "we heard pretty loud and clear from our downtown merchants, that they needed the bump in

traffic that Dickens brought. We wanted to find a way ... so we kind of reimagined the event." See dickensroanoke.com for more details.

Shift changes in 2021 at Salem plant

Yokohama Tire Manufacturing Virginia is set to implement schedule changes next year. The plant in Salem will switch from a 4 shift-7-day schedule to a 3-shift-5-day schedule in order they say to improve efficiencies. Company officials say another goal is to reallocate resources, allowing some vacant positions to be filled and a strengthening of areas currently underserved.

2019 tourism revenues up

Tourism revenue for Lexington, Buena Vista, and Rockbridge County reached \$185.9 million, a two percent increase over 2018, according to the **Virginia Tourism Corporation**. Local tourism-supported jobs totaled 1,408 while local tourism-related taxes were \$4.5 million. Tourism revenue for the Shenandoah Valley's 14 localities stretching from Lexington to Winchester reached \$1.57 billion in 2019, a \$46 million increase over 2018. Local tourism-supported jobs totaled 13,859 while local tourism-related taxes increased \$1.4 million to \$45.8 million. The VTC says tourism in Virginia generated \$27 billion in visitor spending in 2019. The

tourism industry also supported 237,000 jobs for Virginia communities and provided \$1.8 billion in state and local revenue. Virginia ranks 8th in the nation for domestic travel spending. Of course, the 2020 numbers will show a sharp dip courtesy of the pandemic, but tourism is seen as a key to economic recovery if and when the COVID-19 situation stabilizes.

Malls in trouble?

The owner of Valley View in Roanoke and more than 100 other malls have filed for bankruptcy protection, hurt by the coronavirus pandemic that has seen tenants permanently close stores or not pay the rent. **CBL Properties** says its malls will remain open as they go through the bankruptcy process.

More GO VA funds in region

Governor Ralph Northam has announced two allocations of **Growth and Opportunity for Virginia (GO Virginia)** grants, totaling more than \$9 million. A portion of that funding (\$290,000) is headed to the Experiential Learning in Tech Employment (ELITE) Internship Program in Montgomery County and the City of Roanoke. The Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council will provide internship opportunities for students earning a software developer degree at a regional four-year university and connect them with

small-based technology companies that do not have the expertise or capacity to manage an internship program.

Women's Foundation makes grant awards

The **Roanoke Women's Foundation** has awarded a total of \$360,000 for 2020; announcements made via a YouTube event in early November. 7 organizations shared those funds: Bradley Free Clinic (\$100,000), Western Virginia Workforce Development Board (\$55,000), ARCH (\$52,000), Children's Trust (\$50,000), Science Museum of Western Virginia (\$41,000), Habitat for Humanity (\$32,000), Virginia Hunters Who Care (Venison for the Hungry) (\$30,000). That money will be used for everything from the Science Museum's 3-D planetarium to repairing the Habitat ReStore, to renovating ARCH's Trust

House shelter. "Perhaps in no other year in The Roanoke Women's Foundation's [16 year] history have its members stretched to do as much as we could for as many people as we could. The COVID-19 pandemic amplified the critical needs our communities face," said RWF President Nancy Dixon.

SML Chamber policy agenda

Looking ahead to the 2021 General Assembly session that begins next month, the **Smith Mountain Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce** outlined its policy agenda ahead of time, crafted by volunteer community members from various business sectors and approved by the Chamber's board. It includes funding for a SML Community Center venue, a "cautious approach" to legislation that would raise the minimum wage and paid

family leave, support for Virginia's Right To Work status and funds to educate lake users on the hazards of zebra mussel infestation. Support for more broadband, career and technical education, an Amtrak station in the Town of Bedford and considering peak tourist season numbers when funding road projects in the VDOT Smart Scale scoring system are also on the legislative wish list for the SML Chamber. "State and local issues directly impacting the Lake region's economic vitality and quality of life are focal points of our agenda," say Executive Director Christopher Finley.

State of the County

This year's State of the County address in **Roanoke County** was virtual last month, no Regional Chamber breakfast with hundreds of guests this time due

to pandemic precautions. Board of Supervisors chairman David Radford call for increased funding to support broadband expansion, saying that around 30 percent of the county is unserved or underserved when it comes to high speed internet access. Radford also outlined how CARES Act funding has been used to cover expenses directly related to the pandemic – including small business assistance – also hailing the arrival of Mack Trucks and plans to reimagine the Tanglewood-419, Hollins and Oak Grove areas as more mixed-use, urban centers. "The lessons we learned have shown that we must remain flexible, adaptable, and creative when dealing with uncertain conditions," said Radford in a video address.

*Compiled by
Gene Marrano*

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Tom Field

Amy White

Be where you need to be

By Tom Field

Valley Business FRONT introduces Amy White, an advisory board member representing the education sector.

Amy White has a confession. She was reluctant to take her first position at Virginia Western Community College. Why? She already loved where she was and what she was doing.

"I had my dream job," White begins. "Even though I never initially set out to be in college administration, I loved science and I loved the college environment. I had this position at JMU and it was

just where I needed to be.”

But living in Botetourt County (Buchanan), her commute was about two hours one way; and she was also a single mom with two small children. A position opened at Virginia Western Community College, and she took it.

“I was happy at JMU,” White says. “But I reluctantly took the Virginia Western position. In the back of my mind, I was thinking I was leaving a university position that a lot of people dream about... including me.”

And then something happened.

“One week on the job, and I realized how shallow that kind of thinking was... Here [at VWCC] I could do much more. Here’s where I could make an impact.”

White says Virginia Western is much more nimble than many universities. She knows the students. In short, since 2003 when she “reluctantly” joined the staff, she now has a “new” dream job.

“We can listen here,” White continues. “And we want to listen. We’re able to change to meet the needs of the community.”

White likes how Virginia Western serves multiple populations of students.

“On the one hand, we have our transfer programs, offering four-year opportunities to students who may not have had access to that; and on the other hand, we’re a direct pipeline to the workforce, for students to enter the workplace right away, with a good living wage.”

White wants people to know Virginia Western Community College “is open for business.” She’s emphatic that COVID is “not shutting us down.”

“Some things are more difficult,” White confesses. “We are addressing the best ways to have engagement in the learning process. But above it all, we are encouraging growth. We can reach more with our technology; and today, more than ever, education is truly attainable.”

“IN BRIEF”

NAME: Amy White

POSITION: Dean of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics; Virginia Western Community College

EDUCATION: James Madison University: Bachelor’s degree in Biology, minor in English; Virginia Commonwealth University: Master’s in Microbiology and Immunology

BACKGROUND: Birthplace: Roanoke, VA; lifelong resident of Buchanan; James River High School; worked in toxicology consulting; on a whim, began teaching at Hollins University and loved it (12 years), and back to JMU (2 years); Took her first position at Virginia Western Community College as Biology Instructor (2003), advanced to program head, assistant dean, and Dean.

ASSOCIATIONS: American Society for Microbiology, state chapter secretary; Botetourt County Chamber of Commerce board member and Botetourt YMCA board member; Buchanan Presbyterian Church leadership council; active with local agricultural organizations (FFA, 4H).

PERSONAL: Age: 55; Married (to Corbin White); 2 Children (daughter Lindsey at Veterinarian School, University of Georgia; son Davis at Graduate School of Poultry Science at University of Georgia).

INTERESTS: Gardening (“I’m a farmers market junkie.”)

White cites an example of just one improved setting under the pandemic:

“We’re still innovative. Just this semester, we set up a series of ‘Computer Science/IT Scholars’ lectures on Wednesdays where we have IT professionals [from local leading institutions] present for 45 minutes, followed by a robust Q&A that also takes 45 minutes. These are great; the students are very engaged.”

White concludes with a simple idea that education at VWCC “complements who and what you are.”

She’s where she needs to be to accomplish that; summed up in three familiar words.

Living the dream. 

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NOTICE: The COVID-19 “coronavirus” pandemic has affected most events and activities by businesses and organizations serving our news coverage region. Specific schedules and dates cited in this edition of FRONT may have been postponed, canceled, or otherwise changed after press time. Please check with each business or organization for the most updated information on any event or activity you intend to engage.

“”
Let's get ready to rumble. — Page 8

Dr Pepper PARK

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(Advertised 2021 Season Pass Pricing available 11/27-11/30/2020)

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