VAPDC Elects New Board of Directors

WILLIAMSBURG, VA - VAPDC recently named Billy W. Martin, Sr., Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, and Robert K. Coiner, Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission as President and First Vice President respectively. Also elected were Tim Ware, George Washington Regional Commission and Kevin Byrd, New River Valley Planning District Commission as Second Vice President and Secretary/Treasurer respectively. The elections took place at the Association's Summer Conference and Annual Meeting in Williamsburg, Virginia. F. Woodrow "Woody" Harris, Crater Planning District Commission will serve as Immediate Past President.

Prior to being named VAPDC President, Martin served as the Association's First Vice President. His leadership roles in local government include Chairman of Board of Supervisors; Chairman and Vice Chairman, Roanoke Valley/Alleghany Regional Commission and TAP Board of Directors. Martin currently serves as Chairman, Roanoke Metropolitan Planning Organization and Vice Chairman, Virginia Roanoke River Advisory Committee.

Coiner's leadership roles in local government include serving as Mayor of Gordonsville for 10 years after two terms on Town Council; Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Executive Committee, Rappahannock Rapidan Regional Commission; Legislative Committee, Towns Section Chairman, and Executive Committee, Virginia Municipal League; two terms on the VAPDC Board of Directors; and member of the Governor's Council on Local Government.

Ware became the Executive Director of the George Washington Regional Commission in Fredericksburg in January of 2012. He came to Fredericksburg from the Mid-East Commission, a Regional Commission located in Washington, North Carolina, serving as Fiscal Director, Assistant Executive Director and ultimately as Executive
Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission Celebrates 45th Year
Focus on Collaboration Has Leveraged Investments in the Region

STAUNTON (August 19, 2014)--The Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) turned 45 in September, and the
citizens of the Commonwealth.

The leadership of VAPDC will meet with state agencies this month to discuss areas of possible new collaborations and continued successes. There is no doubt that Virginia's PDCs have a significant role to play in assisting the Governor in his goals for the future of Virginia. VAPDC stands ready to help! Also on our plate for the coming year, VAPDC will continue its efforts in planning for the future with the assistance of Bill Leighty and his team at DecideSmart. The VAPDC Best Practices book will be updated and refined. This document serves as a tool to highlight the many and varied projects undertaken by PDCs/RCs that serve regionalism and save Virginia money.

With the New Year comes the convening of the Virginia General Assembly and the VAPDC Winter Conference. We are still working on the particulars of the Winter Conference, but stay tuned for details. Sponsorship opportunities are still available at www.vapdc.org.

My thanks to those of you who have helped in our efforts, who have given of your time and organization that was created by the Virginia General Assembly in 1969 to establish regional cooperation as a cornerstone to long-term prosperity and economic success continues to distinguish itself as a model of what cooperation between government agencies can accomplish. Particularly successful at leveraging funds and expertise needed for projects and services around the District, the CSPDC has assisted in bringing in over $100 million in new investments to the Region in the past decade. For every dollar the CSPDC received in local membership assessment, an average return of $50 in local, state, federal, and private funds were generated.

The CSPDC is one of 21 regional planning district commissions located throughout the Commonwealth. It is the largest geographically and the fifth largest in population, and is comprised of 5 counties: Augusta, Bath, Highland, Rockbridge, and Rockingham; 5 cities: Buena Vista, Lexington, Staunton, Waynesboro, and Harrisonburg and 11 towns. Issues addressed by CSPDC services include land use planning and regulations, transportation and public transit, solid waste management, water and wastewater utilities, housing, economic development, water resource management, disaster mitigation and education, and human services.

Carolyn W. Dull, CSPDC Chairperson and Staunton City Mayor says, "The Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission has served as an outstanding example in the Commonwealth of why regional cooperative activities are critical to the cost-effective delivery of needed services in our communities. The program successes facilitated by the CSPDC these past 45 years show that in spite of state and local governments being asked to "do more with less," regional planning can have a major impact on governmental efficiency."

The CSPDC celebrated the anniversary in August with project displays and presentations by staff for Commission Board members and invited guests. To learn more about the CSPDC and their mission, please visit http://www.cspdc.org.

**HRPDC Promotes John Sadler to Emergency Management Administrator**

*by Joe Turner, Communications Manager*

The HRPDC recently promoted Mr. John Sadler to Emergency Management Administrator and he assumed the duties of the position on September 4, 2014. The Administrator position had been vacant since Mr. Curtis Brown left the HRPDC in June for a position at the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. Mr. Sadler previously held the title of Senior Regional Homeland Security Planner. He is a 2007 graduate of the College
talents freely to assist with this work. I’m proud to have been elected president of VAPDC and will work hard to continue our association’s great work. VAPDC and our member PDCs and RCs will continue work to strengthen our efforts, build our relationships and increase our effectiveness. As always, we can use your help!

Billy Martin
President, VAPDC

John joined the HRPDC’s Emergency Management staff in 2007 as a Regional Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Planner where he served as a liaison between federal and state officials and local stakeholders on matters concerning homeland security and emergency management. More recently, as a Senior Regional Homeland Security Planner, he continued his UASI duties and supported other homeland security, emergency management, and hazard mitigation initiatives. In addition, he has provided staff support to regional committees including Urban Area Work Group (UAWG), Regional Emergency Management Technical Advisory Committee (REMTAC), and Hampton Roads Interoperability Communications Advisory Committee (HRICAC). As a result of his experience, Mr. Sadler understands Hampton Roads’ unique challenges and his familiarity with the region’s Emergency Preparedness Stakeholders provides a level of trust no other candidate could offer. His promotion affords continuity in regional emergency planning and forward momentum.

As Emergency Management Administrator, Mr. Sadler will serve as an advocate of emergency management, homeland security and hazard mitigation initiatives and supervise professional and technical personnel and work with varying groups and agencies inside and outside of governments to promote cooperation and understanding of emergency management, homeland security and hazard mitigation principles. Mr. Sadler will be instrumental in securing grants for emergency management programs and the management of those programs.

Congratulations!

Gordonsville Mayor Robert K. Coiner Elected VML Vice President

Gordonsville Mayor Robert K. Coiner will serve a year’s term as vice president of the Virginia Municipal League.

League members voted Coiner into the office during the group’s 109th annual conference held last week in Roanoke.

Coiner, who has served on the Gordonsville Town Council since 2000, has been mayor since 2005.

Coiner has served on the organization’s executive committee since 2009. He currently serves as VAPDC’s First Vice President.
HRPDC Regional Inclusive Emergency Planner Supports National Initiatives, Previous Work Recognized

by Joe Turner, Communications Manager

For the past year, Dawn Brantley, the HRPDC's Regional Inclusive Emergency Planner, has provided her talents and expertise to the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Virtual Social Media Working Group (VSMWG). Ms. Brantley was invited to join the VSMWG in 2013 because of her experience and expertise with social media technologies in emergency management operations. The VSMWG mission is to provide recommendations to the emergency preparedness and response community on the safe and sustainable use of social media technologies before, during, and after emergencies.

In July, the VSMWG released its guidance, Using Social Media for Enhanced Situational Awareness and Decision Support. The report provides best practices and guidance on using social media platforms within the public safety and emergency response communities, including lessons learned from Hurricane Sandy and the Boston Marathon bombing. The report “addresses various challenges associated with the use of social media for situational awareness, the integration of social media within the operational environment, and identifies areas requiring further consideration, research, and development.”

A link to Using Social Media for Enhanced Situational Awareness and Decision Support can be found on DHS' FirstResponder.gov website.

Also, prior to joining the HRPDC, Ms. Brantley served as an Emergency Programs Manager for the Municipality of Anchorage Office of Emergency Management. Her inclusive planning and programs for people with access and functional needs in several emergency planning initiatives were recently featured as a case study in the Transportation Research Board's National Cooperative Highway Research Program Report 777: A Guide to Regional Transportation Planning for Disasters, Emergencies, and Significant Events.

The case study cites the emergency management agency's work with Access Alaska, the largest Center for Independent Living in the state, to plan for access and functional needs populations, as well as enhancements to the city's disaster registry program. National Cooperative Highway Research Program Report 777: A Guide to Regional Transportation Planning for Disasters, Emergencies, and Significant Events can be viewed on the TRB website.
Finally, on August 19th, Ms. Brantley, provided a webinar training on "How to set up an Inclusive Shelter Exercise" for emergency management professionals in FEMA Region 3. The Region includes Washington DC, Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia.

Nearly 30 professionals from Region 3 and across the country logged into the webinar to hear Ms. Brantley share her experience with Anchorage, Alaska's shelter exercise. The exercise included movement and set up of functional needs shelter and support equipment, public volunteers sleeping overnight in the shelter, including individuals with disabilities, educational programming for the participants, and tested Anchorage's new FANS (Functional and Access Needs Support) Team volunteer program.

**Fracking In Virginia’s Coastal Plain**

Natural gas exploration technology has advanced so quickly in the last decade, regulators and the communities affected by it are still catching up.

In the process, a wide range of contradictory opinions about the benefits and risks of the technology have jostled for credibility—promises of risk-free energy independence to predictions of devastating environmental disasters.

To offer the public an opportunity to learn more about what is best for some of eastern Virginia’s localities, the Northern Neck Planning District Commission-together with the Northern Neck-Chesapeake Bay Region Partnership and Rappahannock Community College (RCC)-organized a panel discussion on fracking on September 3, 2014, at RCC’s Warsaw, Virginia, campus.

Members of the panel included Virginia Secretary of Commerce and Trade Maurice Jones; Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources Molly Ward; the President of the Virginia Oil and Gas Association, Brentley
Archer; and Rick Parrish, a senior attorney with the Southern Environmental Law Center. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was also invited to participate, but officials there decided not to send a representative, stating that they considered fracking a matter for local and not national regulation.

Fracking Panel (left to right): Brentley Archer, Rick Parrish, Secretary Molly Ward, and Secretary Maurice Jones

The discussion was facilitated by Jerry W. Davis, the Northern Neck Planning District Commission's Executive Director.

More than 100 people attended the panel discussion, which focused mostly on the risks that fracking may pose to groundwater if drilling takes place in the Taylorsville Basin, a shale formation that covers several counties in the region.

The event was precipitated by the rapid growth of oil-and-gas-exploration leases in Caroline, King George, King and Queen, Essex, and Westmoreland Counties (leases covering some 86,000 acres to date).

Many more counties could also be affected if drilling ends up contaminating the aquifers that all residents of the region depend on. This risk of groundwater contamination is on top of the list of concerns about utilizing fracking technology in coastal Virginia.

During the discussion, Secretary Ward said that the State of Virginia is "laser-focused on the care and future of the aquifer, not just from drilling but also from its overuse."

And for those interested in keeping fracking operations out of their counties, her overall message was that the best approach was to adopt zoning ordinances that ban the practice altogether within county boundaries.

**A Summary of the Projects Receiving Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF) Awards**

*by Jill Sunderland, Water Resources Planner*

DEQ awarded nearly $23M to Virginia localities for stormwater improvement projects in the first phase of the SLAF program. HRPDC staff conducted a desktop analysis of the projects and examined the types of best management practices (BMPs) used and the cost effectiveness of the BMPs at removing total phosphorous. DEQ awarded grants to all of the projects that came under $50,000 per pound of total phosphorous removed per year. Our analysis also led to the development of recommendations.
on selecting and tracking projects for the next phases of the SLAF program.

Fifteen different categories of BMPs were included in the project submittals. Stream restoration was the most commonly used BMP, and all 24 of those projects submitted received funding. The most cost effective projects used dry ponds, extended dry detention, and stream restoration. The most expensive BMPs were permeable pavement and bioretention.

The recommendations are aimed at more closely aligning the grant program with the draft Chesapeake Bay TMDL MS4 Action Plan Guidance. Staff recommends that the SLAF application use the draft Action Plan Guidance methodology to calculate the pollutant loading rates and evaluate the removal of nitrogen and sediment in addition to phosphorus. Lastly, HRPDC staff suggests that DEQ dedicate a portion of the SLAF resources to encourage innovative projects. The summary report is available here.

Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission Assisting Area Workforce Development Board

The Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission (RVARC) is providing interim staffing services for 6 months to the Western Virginia Workforce Development Board (WVVDB) as it searches for a permanent Executive Director and considers broader organizational changes. The WVVDB works to meet the needs of businesses for
skilled workers and individuals' needs for training, education, and employment and has the same service area as the RVARC.

Regional Trails Taking Shape in Hampton Roads  
by Sara Kidd, Senior Regional Planner

Hampton Roads is home to a variety of trails for hikers, bikers, and boaters. Several of these trails have been completed while others are still under construction or in the planning phase. Recently, some exciting progress has been made on a few of the trails, bringing them a few steps closer to completion.

The South Hampton Roads Trail (SHRT) is a 41-mile proposed multi-use/bicycle route between Suffolk and Virginia Beach. Two sections of this trail are now on their way to construction. The planned section between the Driver and Pughsville neighborhoods in Suffolk has been funded and will begin construction later this year (see map). This portion of the SHRT is a rails-to-trails project and is known as the Suffolk Seaboard Coastline Trail locally. Also, a 1.8-mile rails-to-trail segment of the SHRT in the City of Portsmouth was recently approved for funding for both planning and construction phases for a multi-use path. Both HRPDC and HRTPO staff have been involved on the steering committee for this project.

The Beaches to Bluegrass Trail (B2B) is a statewide trail being planned by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) which traverses the entire state from the Cumberland Gap to the Virginia Beach oceanfront and Eastern Shore. The B2B seeks to connect existing multi-use trails where possible but for the interim (where there are gaps), on-road bike routes will be designated. The HRPDC approved a letter of support for the B2B in March 2014. The letter also expressed support for the B2B and SHRT sharing the same route through Hampton Roads where there is overlap. The final plan for the B2B will be available in the Fall of 2014.

The Captain John Smith National Historic Trail (CAJO) traces the historic routes of John Smith as he explored the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. The James River segment plan of the CAJO has recently been completed. In May 2014, the Nansemond segment in Suffolk was opened and dedicated along with a new informational kiosk at Bennett's Creek Park. Other kiosks will be installed in Suffolk...
at Sleepy Hole Park and Constant’s Wharf. A new public kayak launch at Constant’s Wharf is also slated for construction, which was funded through the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program via the HRPDC. Other informational kiosks for the CAJO will be installed around the region in the future at Windsor Castle Park in Smithfield, Fort Monroe, Jamestown, Chippokes State Park, and York River State Park.

For a comprehensive list of all existing, planned, and proposed regional trails in Hampton Roads, please visit our regional trails page.

Planning Collaboration with the New River Valley MPO

In August, the NRVPDC presented the final version of the New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. The presentation marked the successful completion of a 2-year collaborative planning process. The purpose of the plan was to develop a long-range multimodal transportation system strategy for the urbanized areas of the New River Valley.

The process was led by a stakeholder group that included local governments, universities, transportation operators, and local organizations. The group utilized the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation’s Multimodal Design Guidelines to create the plan. The final plan identifies a continuous system of multimodal corridors that interconnects key population and employment centers within the urbanized area.

One of the final products of the plan is an online Multimodal Transportation System Planning Tool. As a product of the plan, the tool is geared towards helping localities identify mode choice gaps within the existing transportation system, evaluate potential solutions based on the density of jobs and housing, and prioritize bicycle and pedestrian improvements. The tool was recently selected to receive a National Association of Development Organization’s Innovation Award. The planning tool can be found online at www.nrvpdc.org/nrvmpo/bikepedplan.

The NRVMPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan project is one of many collaborative efforts between the Commission and MPO over the last five years. The framework of the next collaborative task is set to begin in January 2015, when the staff of the MPO and Commission will begin developing a Passenger Rail Study for the New River Valley. The study was recently approved by the MPO Policy Board. The project is anticipated to take 12 - 18 months, and the
final products will include identifying potential demand, evaluate train stop locations, and impacts on the region.

For additional information about either project, contact Kevin Byrd, (540) 639-9313, ext. 212.

**HRPDC Members Recognized for Collaborative Planning**

*by Joe Turner, Communications Manager*

Congratulations to the city of Williamsburg and James City and York counties!

The three HRPDC members were recently recognized by the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA VA) at its 2014 annual conference held in July at the Wintergreen Resort. The APA VA awarded an outstanding planning award for the Historic Triangle Coordinated Comprehensive Plan Review.

The Review is the result of a process to coordinate efforts in reviewing and updating the three jurisdictions’ comprehensive plans. The collective initiative allowed for a "joint discussion of land use, transportation, and other issues that cross the jurisdictional boundaries that run through the Historic Triangle." Joint public meetings allowed citizens and Planning Commission members from all three localities to discuss issues of mutual interest, focusing on areas where the jurisdictions meet.

The Historic Triangle Coordinated Comprehensive Plan Review continues a tradition of inter-jurisdictional cooperation among the three localities. The region's transit operator, Williamsburg Area Transport, and the Williamsburg Regional Library system with branches in all three localities, are among other collaborative initiatives.

To review the Historic Triangle Coordinated Comprehensive Plan Review, visit the Review's website, [http://www.htplanning.org/](http://www.htplanning.org/)

**The Commonwealth Regional Council (CRC) Provides Grant Writing Services**

The Commonwealth Regional Council (CRC) provides Grant Writing services when requested by localities and also assists non-profits and other organizations when requested by the member localities. In 2013, the CRC assisted three Volunteer Fire Departments to request funds from the FEMA Firefighters Assistance Grant Program. All three grant requests were funded. The Firefighters Assistance Grant Program is a highly competitive nationwide program that provides funding to meet the firefighting and emergency response needs of fire departments and nonaffiliated emergency medical service organizations.

Prospect Volunteer Fire Department (PVRD) was established in 1960 and has 27 active firefighters that serve a rural population of 2,342 citizens with a 55 square mile first-due response area in rural Prince
Edward County. In summer 2014, the PVRD received federal funding of $67,260 to purchase 27 sets of Turnout Gear and related items. This funding will ensure replacing non-compliant, unsafe equipment.

Kenbridge Volunteer Fire Department (KVFD) was established in 1911 and serves the citizens of the Town of Kenbridge as well as one-third of rural Lunenburg County citizens for a total of 5,500 citizens in the first-due service area covering an area of 175 square miles. KVFD has 51 active firefighters. In summer 2014, KVFD received federal funding of $179,802 to purchase 35 sets of Turnout Gear and 20 Air Packs. Thirty-one of the firefighters had non-compliant equipment with four of the firefighters not having any gear at all. This funding will ensure that all of the firefighters have safe compliant equipment.

The Hampden-Sydney Volunteer Fire Department (HSVFD) was established in 1957 and re-organized in 1970. HSVFD has 35 active members. The department's primary response area covers approximately 70 square miles, which includes Hampden-Sydney College and the surrounding community, serving 4,050 citizens. Given its location in the center of Prince Edward County, HSVFD is also a second responder with five nearby departments, including the Town of Farmville (home to Longwood University) - adding another 184 square miles to its overall response area. In summer 2014, HSVFD received federal funding of $59,796 to purchase 29 sets of Turnout Gear, which will replace gear that has become unsafe due to age and wear. Having the new gear will allow HSVFD to properly outfit all of its members in gear that is compliant with applicable safety standards, allowing its firefighters to properly battle fires.

The FEMA Firefighters Assistance Grant Program is currently slated to open for applications in 2014 in the October/November timeframe. The CRC anticipates assisting several fire departments in applying for funding in this round.

HRPDC Hosts Climate Adaptation Training for Local Staff
by Ben McFarlane, Senior Regional Planner

This past July local planners, engineers, and other staff from across Hampton Roads took advantage of a long month to participate in a workshop on Climate Adaptation for Coastal Communities. The
training was provided by staff from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Coastal Services Center, and hosted by the Hampton Roads PDC at Newport News Waterworks. In addition to NOAA and HRPDC, several other partners took part in planning and coordinating the training, including Wetlands Watch, the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program, and the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. Over forty people attended the three-day training, including thirty-seven who attended for all three days. The training was provided through NOAA program funds and the HRPDC's existing Coastal Zone Management grants, so there was no cost to attendees. The training also provided continuing education credits to certified planners and floodplain managers.

Climate Adaptation for Coastal Communities was designed by NOAA to teach local practitioners about climate change impacts and tools and techniques they could use to address those impacts in their communities. The course featured a mix of presentations (including some from Hampton Roads communities) and hands-on activities that put concepts into use. Day 1 focused on climate change science, Day 2 focused on vulnerability and adaptation, and Day 3 focused on communications and implementation. The sessions highlighted local communities, with presentations including existing and projected climate conditions for Hampton Roads and local activities and programs Hampton Roads cities and counties already have in place. Activities included identifying climate stressors, scoping out and conducting qualitative vulnerability assessments, and identifying adaptation options.

Overall, the training was well received. The lessons learned should be carried over into local plans addressing climate change impacts on Hampton Roads communities, with several localities’ efforts already underway or soon to begin.

**Fields of Gold Members Chosen for Bon Appétit Appalachia Tourism Mapguide**

Fifteen members of the Fields of Gold Agritourism program, administered by the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission, were recently selected by the Appalachian Regional
Commission (ARC) as participants in the Bon Appétit Appalachia program. The program showcases 283 of the Appalachian Region's most distinctive food destinations and the mapguide was available as an insert in the summer 2014 issue of Food Traveler Magazine. Businesses featured include local farms, farmers markets, farm-to-table restaurants, wineries, craft breweries, and other culinary destinations.

Bon Appétit Appalachia builds on ARC's efforts to promote Appalachia's local-food economy and support its growing food systems sector. The ARC region covers a 13-state area from New York to Mississippi. The ARC communities within the Fields of Gold region include the counties of Bath, Highland, Rockbridge, Botetourt and the cities of Buena Vista and Lexington. Visit www.visitappalachia.com/bonappetitappalachia/ for more information.

**Bike-Walk Summit Highlights Bicycle Tourism in Harrisonburg-Rockingham**

The Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition (SVBC) and the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (HRMPO), in partnership with the City of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County, hosted the 2014 Harrisonburg & Rockingham Bike-Walk Summit on October 10, 2014, on the James Madison University (JMU) campus. Each year the Bike-Walk Summit brings together a broad range of partners who are working to make Harrisonburg and Rockingham County a great biking and walking community to live in and visit. This year the summit focused on bicycle tourism and featured a keynote address from Ginny Sullivan, Director of Travel Initiatives for the Adventure Cycling Association.

**Envision Hampton Roads Launches Website**

*by Joe Turner, Communications Manager*
The new Envision Hampton Roads website was unveiled at the July meeting of the Envision Hampton Roads (EHR) stakeholders. The website was donated to the regional planning effort by Insercorp, a website design shop in Franklin, whose President, Tim Bradshaw, is among the EHR stakeholders. Insercorp staff worked with Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) staff to develop the site, www.envisionhamptonroads.org.

The site is dedicated to the regional strategic planning process that the HRPDC embarked on in 2013. EHR seeks to develop Hampton Roads’ first Community-based Regional Strategic Plan through building upon the Urban Land Institute’s Reality Check Hampton Roads and several other past conversations regarding regional planning. EHR’s innovative approach to planning gives the residents of Hampton Roads the opportunity to set the course for their community’s future. The goal of EHR is to engage residents to participate in the establishment of a shared Regional Vision that ultimately creates a blueprint for the Region’s future that leads to Hampton Roads being a great place to live, work, play, learn, and visit. In developing Envision Hampton Roads, the HRPDC will be following a seven step Community Based Planning approach. The first step involved listening sessions and a survey of residents to establish Community Values. The Visioning phase is currently underway. From there, the process includes: Strategy, Plan, Fund, Build, and Achieve.

The new website is a repository for all things EHR. Using the new website, residents will be able to follow the EHR planning process through the seven step Community Based Planning approach, watch stakeholders meetings, and learn about upcoming opportunities for involvement.

Intermodal Study in Final Stretch
The first review of the draft Western Virginia Intermodal Study was presented to the Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Policy Board at their September 2014 meeting. The study found that there are positives to an intermodal facility in our area. Also, the study predicts that the facility can operate at a profit from an operating cash flow perspective, and that there are some challenges with regards to covering fixed capital costs. However, staff found that other intermodal facilities such as those in Greer, SC (near a BMW Warehouse), Greencastle, PA and Pritchard WV (under construction) also required public support in meeting fixed capital costs in order to get built. Fixed costs appear to be a challenge for all intermodal facilities. The Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission serves as staff and fiscal agent to the Roanoke Valley Area MPO.

The Town of Smithfield Becomes 17th Member of the HRPDC
by Joe Turner, Communications Manager

In May, the Smithfield Town Council executed a resolution formalizing Smithfield's participation as a voting member of the HRPDC. The Town officially became the 17th member of the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission on July 1, 2014. Mayor T. Carter Williams and Town Manager Peter Stephenson were appointed to the HRPDC and joined the other 16 jurisdictions for the Town's first official meeting on July 17, 2014.

The Code of Virginia provides that eligible localities that are not original members of a PDC may elect to join the applicable PDC pursuant to procedures established by a charter agreement. Article VI of HRPDC's Charter Agreement made as of July 1, 1990, and as amended contains three provisions regarding the addition of new localities.

1) An eligible locality may join the HRPDC at the end of the HRPDC's current fiscal year, provided the locality adopts and executes the Charter Agreement.
2) Within 60 days of notification of the locality's desire to join, the HRPDC shall submit a report to the remaining governing bodies recommending any necessary modifications to the Charter Agreement or Bylaws.
3) The new locality is responsible for its pro rata share of the operation from the effective date of the addition.

Until now, Town residents have been represented at the HRPDC through Isle of Wight County's membership, however recent
population increases within the Town's border made a separate membership more attractive. Town staff have long been appreciative of the programs and services, such as those involved with water, stormwater and wastewater issues, including www.askHRgreen.org, the HRPDC's environmental education program. The Smithfield Town Council adopted the HRPDC's Charter Agreement at its May 6, 2014, meeting.

**Fields of Gold Agritourism Program Awarded USDA Grant**

A growing group of agritourism operators in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia recently received a significant boost in promotional and technical support with the award of a $93,674 U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) grant to the Fields of Gold Agritourism Program. Authorized through the Agricultural Act of 2014 (the 2014 Farm Bill), over $52 million in funding was distributed nationwide through five USDA grant programs. The Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission will administer the Farmers Market Promotion Program grant on behalf of the Fields of Gold program. Funds will be used to boost rural economic activities by increasing marketing and promotions of the Fields of Gold Farm Trail.

Congressman Bob Goodlatte, 6th District Virginia commented on the award: "Agriculture is at the core of our region's economy, and the Shenandoah Valley Fields of Gold Agritourism Program is doing innovative, collaborative work to benefit this important industry. I look forward to the job creation, small business development, and increased agritourism that this grant will help to generate across the CSPDC."

Fields of Gold is a regional agritourism promotion program in the Shenandoah Valley that both markets member farms and businesses and provides agritourism focused business support services to encourage farm/business expansion, diversified revenue, and increased sales of local and regional agricultural products. The program covers an eight-county, five-city region in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley and currently serves 180 member farms and agritourism businesses including wineries, breweries, cideries, pick-your-own farms, farmers markets, farm tours, farm-to-table restaurants and on-farm lodging establishments.

For more information on the Fields of Gold agritourism program and upcoming events, visit www.fieldsofgold.org