



**GO Virginia Region One Agriculture and Food Manufacturing
Working Group Meeting**

Tuesday, October 25, 2018

1:00 p.m.

Heartwood, Boardroom 2, Abingdon, VA

Participants: David Eaton, Ben Gilmer, Heather Music, Steve Breeding, Kathlyn Terry, Whitney Bonham, Susan Copeland, Will, Becki Joyce, Joe Gillespie, Robyn Lee, Danny, Jerry Moles, Gill Paterson, Jeff Mansour, Robert Bandon SWCC, David Leonard
Zoom Call: Kendrick Faison.

GO Virginia Update – RFP for Agriculture Strategies: Robyn began with descriptions of the RFP-Regional action plan for different organizations implementing agriculture projects in the region. Once the RFP is released, a link will be shared. **GO VA update:** Two projects were approved at the last Regional Council meeting. The project applications have been submitted to DHCD and the State Board and are pending approval.

1. Coal to Graphene Market Study: Virginia Tech will be transferring technology to EnviraCarbon to scale up the processing for manufacturing graphene at a significantly reduced cost. VT will be conducting a market study to access the market for graphene from coal.
2. \$200k was recommended for the Virginia Highlands Community College Advanced Technology and Workforce Development Center.
- 3.

Kathlyn Terry, High-Value Farming and Processing in Appalachia – Mined Lands and Forests.

The Powell River Project AML Project site would be used as a commercial scale innovative agriculture center. This could look at the potential for crops grown for Lush Cosmetics, medicinal buyers and/or craft beverage crops allowing for full value chain in the increasingly popular market. Kathlyn also shared about Stone Crusher machinery that could be coming to the area. Remediation could be \$1,700 an acre with this machine. Virginia Tech would partner in this project for potential research and development opportunities. This would be a DMME proposal and eventually, a GO Virginia application.

David Eaton/Walter State Community College: In Saltville, there are possible opportunities for salt-packing meat. This could be a value-added opportunity for locally sourced meat packing material with traditional methods.

Blue Ridge Plateau Initiative Update: Jerry/Danny - “Triple bottom line” There are three essential needs:

- 1:** To develop financial security, value added and holding process locally.
- 2:** Meeting shared needs, safety, business planning for agriculture and marketing.
- 3:** Environmental stability is a must. This bottom line has to be market driven, so we should search for high value markets. This initiative was designed to speak to needs at the grassroots level and taking a unified approach. Food Safety certifications for supermarkets,

marketing company, slaughter, land management investment management service and non-timber forest products are important.

Agriculture – Drones and Ag Tech (Kendrick Faison) Spatial GIS – Drone Technology; what can we do with it? This technology can take a broad acreage area for spreading seed and spray in select locations based on need. It can be used for updating mapping data for farm analysis. NVI: Near Vegetation Indices – A laser focus and crop monitoring system can measure soil deficiencies. It can also be used for livestock and beef tracking and predatory species monitoring. According to the FAA requirements for drone flying, a payload of 55lbs is all that is allowed, but frequency and flight pattern training can be programmed in a drone.

Cross Hatch Initiative for Tazewell and Buchanan – Cross Hatch is a group of consultants out of Michigan who are working together with local artists and farmers to enlarge the impact on the local community by creating guilds and cooperatives. Ultimately, there are plans for “Skill Swap” events; a planning process with ASD to have people travel to Ohio to learn and bring knowledge back to Tazewell and Buchanan counties. This initiative will also look to create opportunities in outdoor recreation through trails and guide services.

Refresh Appalachia and Agriculture in SWVA – Ben Gilmer – Refresh Appalachia started in 2014 under Coalfield Development. The purpose is to jumpstart more Agriculture education in WV using farm training via the “36:6:3” model: **33** hours of paid, on the job training, **6** hours a week at a community college working on an associate’s degree, **3** hours a week focus on life skills and personal development. This a 2 to 3-year program. One arm was job training, the other was food hub work. The food hub side was largely modeled after ASD’s; linking producers with the markets and providing assistance to farmers to meet consistency, quantity and quality needs especially in the area of transportation and knowledge to farmers about production planning. Could this be something that could be replicated in SWVA?

Ideas:

Agriculture as entrepreneurship opportunity.

Jerry: “Agriculture speaks to Power” meeting.

Next Meeting: November 29th Heartwood, in Abingdon 1:00 PM.