



GO VIRGINIA REGION ONE
TARGET INDUSTRY WORKING GROUP MEETING
INFORMATION AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

January 28, 2019

12:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority
527 East Main St., Lebanon, Virginia, 24266

Minutes

In Attendance: Alex Doherty, Olivia Rollins, Jeff Rowlett, Dan Minahan, Shannon Blevins, Jonathan Grimes, Jonathan Belcher, Becki O’Quinn, Robyn Lee, Mark Eschle, Ashvin Raj, Esther Bolling, Jim Baldwin, Sam Wolford, Mary Trigiani, Stephen Mullins, Josh Sawyers, Andrew Barnes

Phone: Leslie Peterson, Chris Chmura

Welcome & Introductions - Esther Bolling

Esther welcomed the group, and after introductions, everyone took a short break for lunch and networking.

GO Virginia Working Group Overview - Robyn Lee

Robyn provided an overview of the working group’s history. This working group was established in early 2018, and formed with the purpose of accomplishing the GO Virginia Region One goals and strategies established in the Growth and Diversification Plan. The Technology Working Group continues to meet with the mission of generating project ideas, evaluating the region’s need and capacity, and generating targeted methods for the creation of a strong project pipeline.

Regional Tech Initiatives – All

SWVA HUB Link- This project has been funded by GO Virginia and is currently under contract. Wize Solutions has been contracted as a consultant to build the connection between job seekers and potential employers at a high level. They will establish an advisory board of local business owners, academic institutions and the Southwest Virginia Technology Council to seek feedback to develop the SWVA Hub Link platform.

- **Mountain Empire Community College’s Smart Farming Program at the Center for Workforce and Innovation of Appalachia:** MECC will develop “Smart Farming” programming at the Center for Workforce and Innovation of Appalachia, which will be established at the former Appalachia Elementary School. Once the CWIA is established, the programming will be created to develop certified agriculture technology training programs that will enhance capacity for farmers by collecting data via drones. The data will be analyzed at the new Agriculture Science Laboratory; another component of the CWIA.

MECC is partnering with Appalachian Sustainable Development on the Smart Farming initiative, and is considering the possibility of providing students with the opportunity to go to farms in the region and use the drones themselves.

- **Coal to Graphene Market Study** – This GO Virginia project is a partnership between EnviraCarbon and Virginia Tech, and was submitted for administrative approval to the GO Virginia State Board on December 11, 2018. The project was approved for \$25,000.
- **Sunset Fiber** - CPC Optinet and Sunset Fiber applied for Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI) funds for the Council to Davenport area in Buchanan County, as well as Tobacco Commission Last Mile funding for the Cleveland - Carbo area in Russell County. No approvals have been received as yet. Additionally, ARC funds are being used for a regional assessment of the broadband infrastructure. The Virginia Coalfield Coalition received the ARC POWER grant with inclusion of the Mount Rogers PDC.
- **EWI Cyber Security Initiative Coop** -Buchanan County Industrial Development Authority received VCEDA grant funding to implement a cybersecurity pilot program. The program is designed to create jobs and mentor students in the cyber security field. EWI, also known as the EastWest Institute, is an engineering and technology company based out of Columbus, Ohio. They develop, test, and implement advanced manufacturing technologies, and will work with the Buchanan County IDA on the pilot program.
- **B-Sides Competition** –These are high school and college-level cyber competitions. The BSides group helps to plan these events, which were created to raise awareness of cyber skills in SWVA. This is the first year, which will hopefully lead to the desire for more high school involvement for future years.

Chmura Economics & Analytics: Scope of Work & Regional Data - Alex Doherty-Olivia Rollins

Chmura Economics and Analytics will be consulting with the IT Working Group and will be facilitating three focus group meetings over the next few months to help identify priorities and strategies for advancing opportunities in the technology sector in Region One. Considering this meeting the kickoff, Chmura presented an overview of the work plan including the focus and DNA of each session.

The focus groups will include small and large businesses and traditional, primary consumers inside and outside of the region in order to gain input to understand the potential demand, and potential for remote workers. For example, Ballad Health and Food City all have specific needs for technology workers. Ballad Health's "Accountable Care Community" project could dovetail between workforce and accountable care aspect.

Chmura also presented on the state of the IT workforce in Region One. Highlights from the presentation included a forecasted demand for Computer and Mathematical workforce to increase over the next ten years, creating a total new demand of 1,386 jobs in this sector. Region

One also demonstrated the lowest IT labor cost in the state, with workers earning an average of \$64,600 annually.

Future dates to consider:

- **TECH Council Gala** - June 14th
- **SWVA Economic Forum** – May 15th

Next meeting date: The next Working Group meeting will be in May. Please stay tuned for additional details.