



**Regional
Intergovernmental
Council**



**Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
(CEDS) FY 2024-2028**

**Region III Planning and Development Council
Serving Boone, Clay, Kanawha & Putnam Counties**

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June 2024



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I. Introduction and Purpose

This report constitutes the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for West Virginia Region III, which consists of Boone, Clay, Kanawha and Putnam counties. It is developed by the Regional Intergovernmental Council (RIC) with the support of US EDA and in collaboration with the CEDS Committee and local economic development agencies.

The purpose of the CEDS is to provide an overview and analysis of current economic conditions and a future vision for the region. This vision is expressed as goals, objectives, and strategies; specific projects are also proposed.

The report describes economic development activities and proposed projects within the 4-county region. Our local governments and development agencies were asked to submit their projects for the CEDS process. Our CEDS Committee then convened to review and prioritize the projects, goals, objectives, and strategies.

It should be noted and recognized that since the inception of the CEDS for Boone, Clay, Kanawha and Putnam counties, millions of dollars have been invested in economic development projects that are listed and tracked through this CEDS report.

The CEDS process is long and involved, seeking time and effort from many individuals and organizations throughout the community. The CEDS for the Boone, Clay, Kanawha, and Putnam counties is successful due to collaboration and outreach.

This report is a compilation of efforts by staff and volunteers to critique all economic development activities within the region.

The FY 2024 - 2028 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) went before the RIC Board for approval on June 13, 2024.

Mission and Structure

Mission

The Boone-Clay-Kanawha-Putnam Regional Intergovernmental Council (RIC) was established in 1970 as a voluntary association of local governments. In 1971, it was designated by then Governor Arch Moore as West Virginia Region III, one of eleven such councils in West Virginia. RIC is committed to promoting economic, environmental, educational, cultural, and recreational growth in Boone, Clay, Kanawha, and Putnam counties.

RIC's policy board is comprised primarily of representatives of 25 municipal and four county governments in the Region. The board acts as a forum for discussing mutual problems and dealing with



issues that transcend political boundaries. The RIC staff works for all 29 units of government by assisting with multijurisdictional issues.

The general purpose of the Council as stated in its by-laws is as follows:

“The Council is organized and shall be operated as a cooperative organization of local governments for the promotion of public health, safety and welfare by providing improved public services and facilities, advancing the business prosperity and economic welfare and achieving a satisfactory level of living for the citizens of the area served by the Council.”

Structures

The Regional Intergovernmental Council (RIC) was formally organized in November 1971. RIC’s policy board has 48 members representing 29 local governments and 19 community representatives. The municipalities in this region are as follows:

- | | |
|------------|------------------|
| Bancroft | Belle |
| Buffalo | Cedar Grove |
| Charleston | Chesapeake |
| Clay | Clendenin |
| Danville | Dunbar |
| East Bank | Eleanor |
| Glasgow | Handley |
| Hurricane | Madison |
| Marmet | Nitro |
| Poca | Pratt |
| St. Albans | South Charleston |
| Sylvester | Whitesville |
| Winfield | |

Each political unit, including the 25 municipalities and 4 counties, through its chief elected official, has one vote on all council business. The 19 community representatives also have one vote each.



Regional Intergovernmental Council Board Members

<i>COMMUNITY</i>	<i>REPRESENTATIVE</i>
Boone County Commission	Brett Kuhn
Clay County Commission	Connie Kinder
Kanawha County Commission	Marc J. Slotnick
Putnam County Commission	Andy Skidmore
Town of Bancroft	Jami Echols Hayes
Town of Belle	David A. Fletcher
Town of Buffalo	Conrad Cain
Town of Cedar Grove	Melissa Young
City of Charleston	Amy Shuler Goodwin
Town of Chesapeake	Melissa Hill
Town of Clay	Jason Hubbard
Town of Clendenin	Kay Summers
Town of Danville	Mark McClure
City of Dunbar	Scott E. Elliott
Town of East Bank	Charles A. Blair, II
Town of Eleanor	Cam Clendenin
Town of Glasgow	Donald Fannin
Town of Handley	Essie Ford, Jr.
City of Hurricane	Scott Edwards
City of Madison	James "Buddy" Hudson
Town of Marmet	David T. Fontalbert
City of Nitro	Dave Casebolt
Town of Poca	William Jones
Town of Pratt	Ramon Williams
City of St. Albans	Scott James
City of South Charleston	Frank Mullens
Town of Sylvester	Harvey Ferrell
Town of Whitesville	Fred V. Harless, Jr.
City of Winfield	Randy Barrett
Boone County Citizens Representative	Kris Mitchell
Clay County Citizens Representative	Barry McCune
Kanawha County Citizens Representative	Audrey Kirksey
Putnam County Citizens Representative	Mark A. Stolle, Jr.
City of Charleston Citizens Representative	Andy Backus
RIC Minority Representative	Oree Banks
RIC Minority Representative	Coston Davis, Jr.
Private Sector Representative	Russell Saunders, BridgeValley CTC
Private Sector Representative	Joy Underwood, Coal River Inn
Private Sector Representative	Vacant (<i>formerly held by the late S.K. Miller</i>)
Private Sector Representative	Charles Mays, faith-based community service
Private Sector Representative	Andrew Dunlap, Charleston Area Alliance
Private Sector Representative	Brian Carr, WV Department of Transportation
Private Sector Representative	Kelsey Harrah, Kanawha Valley Reg. Transportation Auth.
Private Sector Representative	Kenneth Kinder, E.L. Robinson Engineering
Private Sector Representative	Eric Sharp, Labor Employees Coop. Trust
Private Sector Representative	Ericke Cage J.D., LL.M., WV State University
Private Sector Representative	Clark McCoy, WV Regional Technology Park
Private Sector Representative	Morganne Tenney, Putnam Co. Development Authority



Regional Intergovernmental Council Staff

Executive Director

Tyler Ferrell

Executive Assistant

Joanna Keller

Finance Manager

Brandy Whittington

Finance Assistant/Project Administrator

Marci Tucker

Project Administrator

SoJuana Ellis

Project Coordinator

Terry Martin

Project Coordinator

Bruce Mullins

Project Coordinator

Ben Newhouse

Transportation Program Manager

Samuel Richardson

Transportation Planner

Jake Smith

Transportation Planner

Jeffery Mace



Regional Intergovernmental Council Officers

Chair

David Casebolt
Mayor, City of Nitro

First Vice-Chair

David Fletcher,
Mayor, Town of Belle

Second Vice-Chair

Kris Mitchell
Boone County Citizen Representative

Third Vice-Chair

Vacant until July 1, 2024
Previously Held by the Late S.K. Miller

Treasurer

Connie Kinder
Commissioner, Clay County Commission

Secretary

Coston Davis, Jr.
Minority Group Representative



II. Summary Background



A. Activities within the Region

Water and Sewer infrastructure, broadband infrastructure, and technology remain very important to our region. Region III serves Boone, Clay, Kanawha and Putnam counties and continues to provide technical assistance, project development and project administration to each county. Water and sewer infrastructure development is vital as these services are needed to enhance our region's economic opportunities. During 2023, RIC administered many infrastructure, community and economic development projects, including:

- Boone County PSD Mountaineer Drive Waterline Extension
- Boone County PSD Boone Memorial Sewer Extension
- Town of Clay Water Storage Project
- Town of Clay Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation
- Region III Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Kanawha PSD Lens Creek Phase II Sewer Extension
- Putnam County Jim Ridge Phase II Waterline Extension
- Clay County Broadband Design Grant
- Kanawha County RDA Standard/Paint Creek Waterline Extension
- Putnam PSD Sewer Extension to Martin Peterbilt with US EDA funding
- Putnam PSD Water treatment improvement Project with US EDA funding
- Town of Chesapeake Sewer System Evaluation Project

RIC also assisted in the development of additional infrastructure, community and economic development projects, including:

- Putnam County Jim Ridge Phase II Waterline Extension
- Town of Cedar Grove Line Rehabilitation Project
- Clay County PSD Big Otter/Nebo/Walker Road Waterline Project
- Clay County Judicial Annex improvements
- Boone County PSD Wastewater Treatment Expansion
- Boone County PSD Wastewater Line and Pump Station Rehabilitation Project
- Boone County PSD Rock Creek Development Infrastructure Projects
- Boone County PSD Foster Phase 1A Sewer line Extension
- Boone County Foster Phase I Sewer Line Extension
- Kanawha County RDA Olcott Waterline Extension
- Kanawha County RDA Leatherwood Waterline Extension
- Kanawha County RDA Crestwood Drive Waterline Extension
- Kanawha County RDA Upper Rambling Road Waterline Extension
- Kanawha County RDA Relation Road Waterline Extension
- Clay County PSD Ossia / Moore Fork Rd Waterline \Extension
- Clay County PSD Grassie Fork Waterline Extension
- Advantage Valley Vosslow Properties Improvement Project



- Putnam County Development Authority Strategic Plan
- Capitol Market Solar Farm Energy Project
- WV Regional Tech Park Lighting Project
- Putnam County Commission Deerfield Estates Waterline Project
- Putnam County Commission Custer Ridge Waterline Extension
- Putnam Public Service District 817 Sewer Line Extension
- Town of Marmet Sewer Rehabilitation Project
- Town of East Bank Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation Project
- Civil Military Innovative Institute Command Center Development
- Elk Valley Public Service District Treatment Plant Ultraviolet System Rehabilitation
- Elk Valley Public Service District Bank Reparation Project
- Sissonville Public Service District Pump Station Rehabilitation Project
- South Charleston Sanitary Board Electrical Replacement Project
- South Charleston Liberty Main Pump Station Rehabilitation
- Town of Whitesville Demolition Project
- Boone County PSD Mountaineer Drive Waterline Extension



B. In the Regional Economy

The Regional Intergovernmental Council (RIC) serves local governments within the four-county region of Boone, Clay, Kanawha and Putnam counties. One of 11 Regional Planning and Development Councils located within the state of West Virginia and designated as Region III, RIC provides an array of services which support economic development, planning and inter-governmental cooperation. Region III features a mix of high-tech manufacturing and value-laden businesses as well as rich, mining-based working lands.

Region III, along with the rest of the State of West Virginia, has experienced the negative impact of the once thriving coal industry. Despite the difficult and extenuating circumstances, economic activity continues to develop in the region.

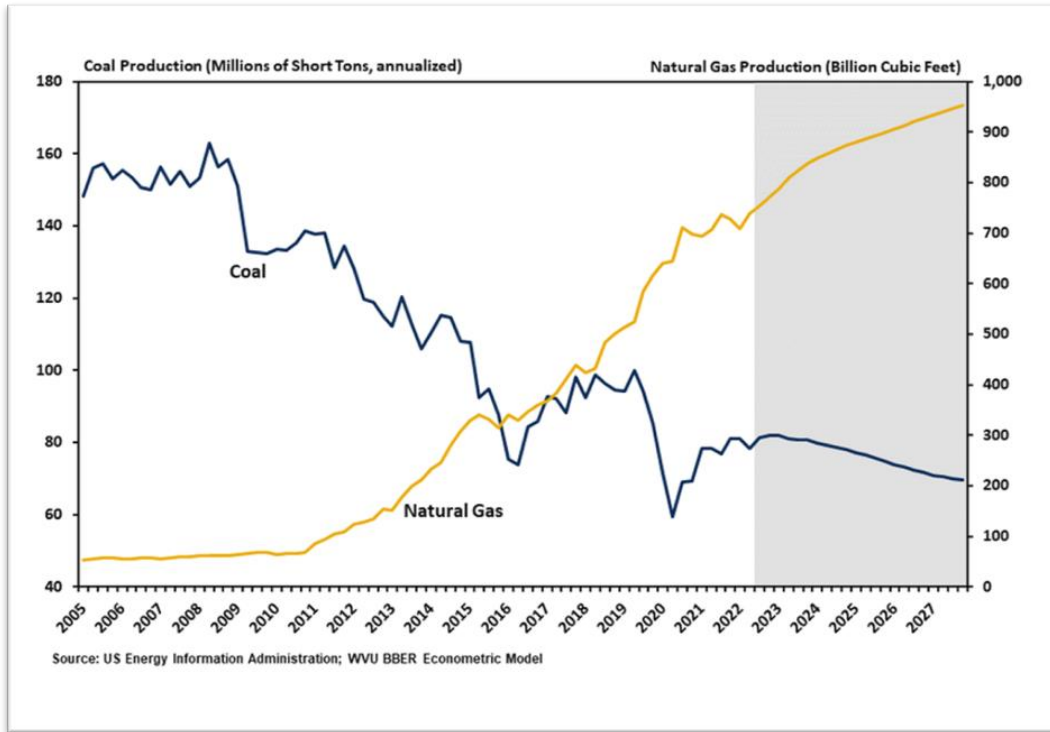


Photo by WVDOH

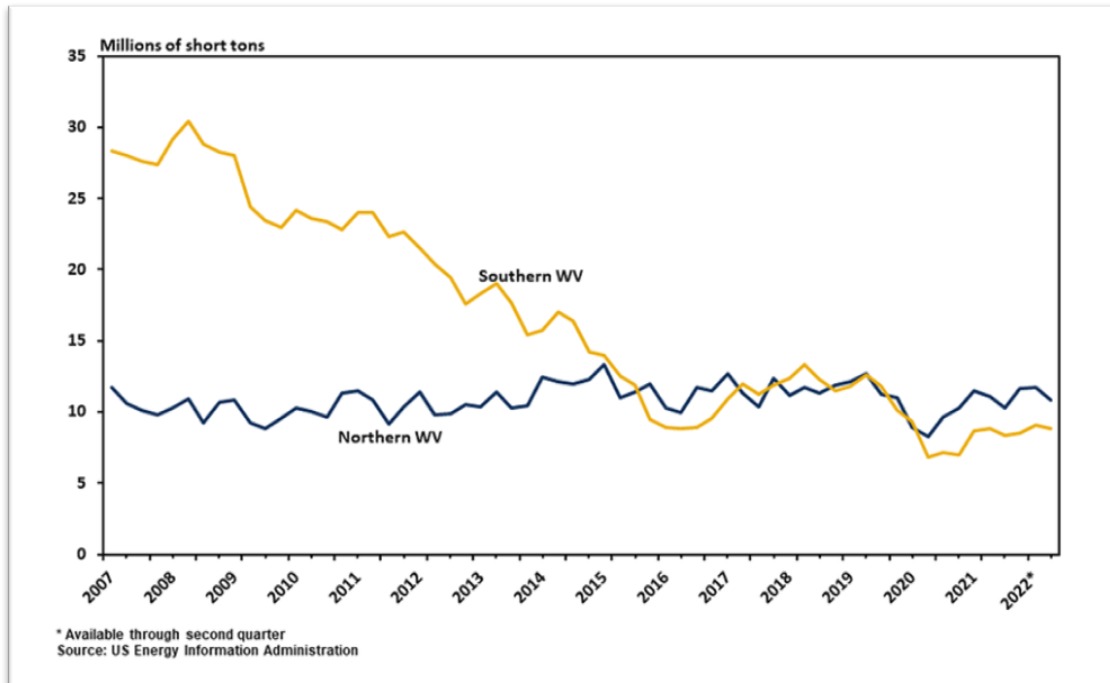
The interstate highway system that serves Region III includes I-64, I-77 and I-79. This interstate system has largely been responsible for Region III's growth as a major distribution center. The river, rail, air, and highway network has been a stimulus to all sectors of the economy and allows Region III ease of trade with all other areas in the nation. Appalachian Corridor G connects southern West Virginia (Boone-Logan) with the Interstates in Charleston.

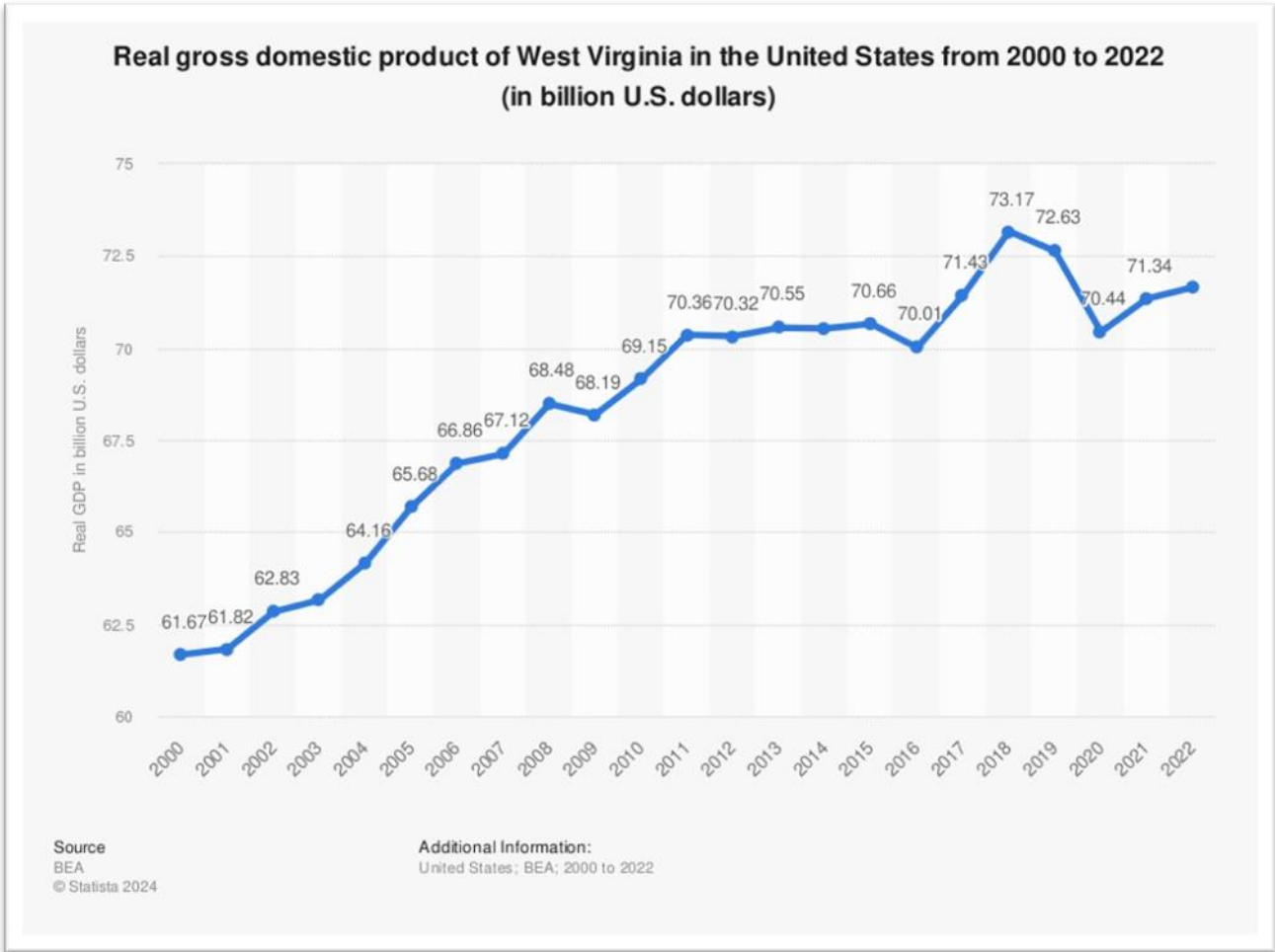


West Virginia Coal & Natural Gas Output



West Virginia Regional Coal Production

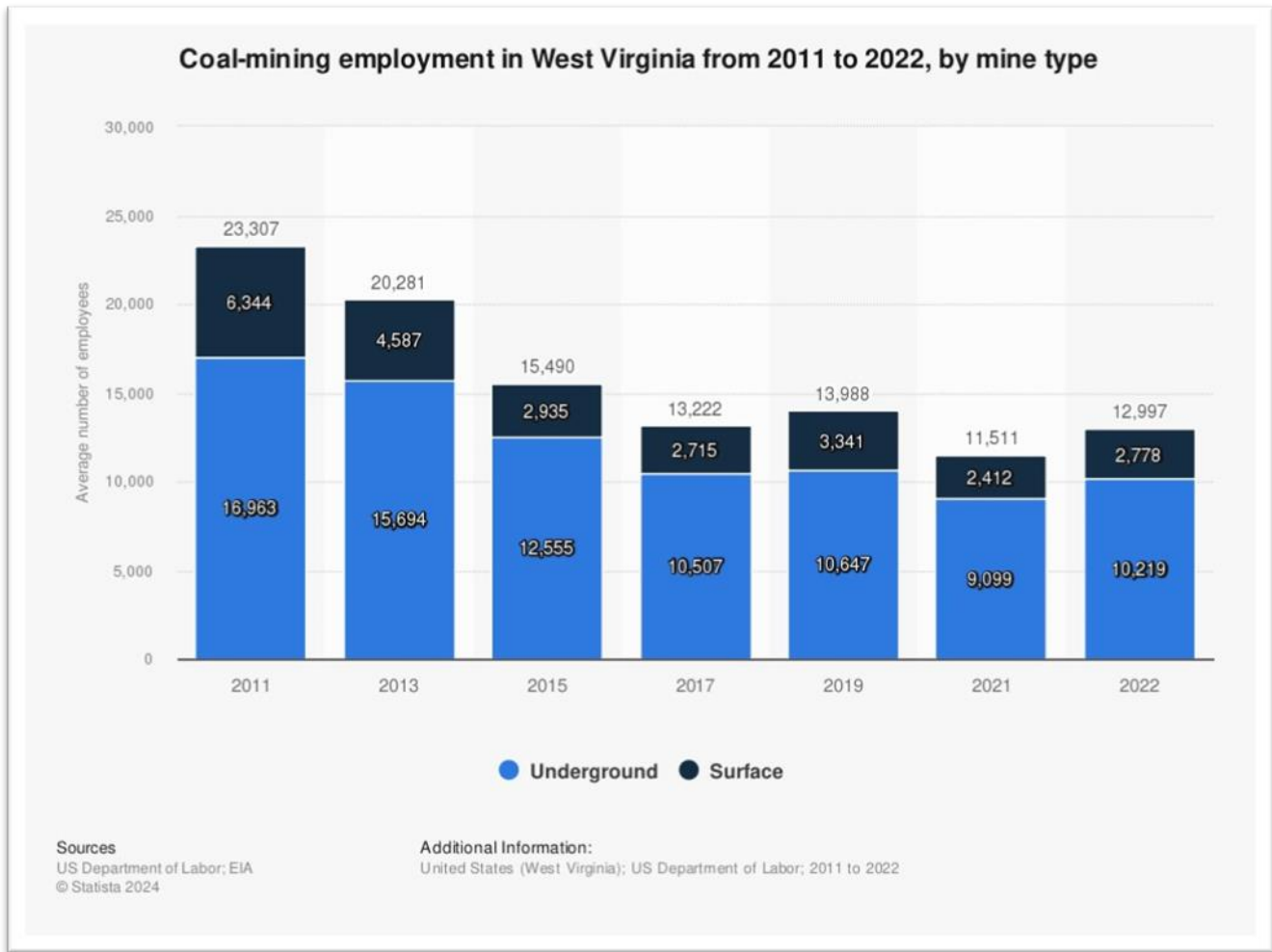




U.S. real GDP of West Virginia 2000-2022

In 2022, the real gross domestic product (GDP) of West Virginia was 71.65 billion U.S. dollars. This is a decrease from the previous year, when the state's real GDP stood at 72.48 billion U.S. dollars.

Above description obtained from Statista, published on 4/5/2023



Coal Mining Employment in West Virginia

In 2022, 10,219 people were working in West Virginia's coal industry in total. Of that number, around 12 percent of the employees worked in underground coal mines.

Coal Mining in West Virginia

Coal mining in West Virginia totaled 13,962 jobs in 2018, with 10,767 jobs located in underground mines and 3,195 jobs dedicated to surface mines. In 2020, two out of ten leading underground coal mines by production are in West Virginia. In the Appalachian region, where West Virginia is located, there were nearly 34,000 coal mining jobs in 2020, down from nearly 30,620 in 2018. West Virginia's standing as a U.S. coal producer



West Virginia’s Standing as a U.S. Coal Producer

In 2009, coal was extracted from 51 different coal seams in the state, and there are 65 seams located in the region that are considered economically viable. While West Virginia is not the first largest producer of coal in the United States, it nevertheless remains one of the largest producers in the United States, only surpassed by Wyoming. In 2020, Wyoming produced 218.6 million short tons of coal, and West Virginia produced some 67.3 million short tons. Despite being one of the largest producers in the United States, coal consumption is greater in many other U.S. states than in West Virginia.

*Above description obtained from Statista Research Department
Published on 12/06/2023*

West Virginia State Energy Profile Quick Facts



- In 2021, West Virginia ranked fifth among the states in total energy production, accounting for 6% of the nation's total.
- In 2022, West Virginia was the second-largest coal producer in the nation, after Wyoming, and accounted for 14% of U.S. total coal production. West Virginia also had 15% of recoverable coal reserves at producing mines, the third-largest reserve base in the nation, after Wyoming and Illinois.
- In 2022, coal-fired electric power plants accounted for 89% of West Virginia's total electricity net generation. Renewable energy resources—primarily hydroelectric power and wind energy—contributed 7% and natural gas provided more than 4%.
- In 2022, West Virginia was fourth in the nation in natural gas marketed production. The state produced a record nearly 2.9 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, more than 5 times greater than 2012, and 95% of it was from shale gas wells.
- West Virginians used about three-fifths of the electricity generated in the state in 2022. As a result, West Virginia was a net supplier of electricity to the regional grid and was among the top states in interstate transfers of electricity. Only four other states sent more of their electricity generation out of state.



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration Last Updated: January 18, 2024



POWER (Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization)

The POWER is a congressionally funded initiative that is comprised of multiple agencies and makes federal resources available to help communities and regions that have been affected by job losses in coal mining, coal power plant operations, and coal-related supply chain industries due to the changing economics of America's energy production. Federal resources are obtained to help these affected areas to promote economic re-growth, enhance diversity, and accentuate alternative job training in hopes of developing opportunities for reemployment.

Since 2015, ARC has invested nearly \$421.6 million in 507 projects touching 365 counties across Appalachia through the POWER Initiative. Together, these investments are projected to create or retain more than 53,000 jobs, leverage more than \$1.81 billion in additional private investments into Appalachia's economy and prepare over 142,000 workers and students for opportunities in entrepreneurship, broadband development, tourism, and other industry sectors.

Source: Appalachian Regional Commission

2023 POWER GRANT AWARD SUMMARIES INFLUENCING REGION III:

Project Title: Powering Prosperity Through Infrastructure Job Training

Grantee: BridgeValley Community & Technical College

Award Amount: \$1,499,969

Announcement Date: October 2023

Project Summary: ARC grant of \$1,499,969 to BridgeValley Community & Technical College in South Charleston, West Virginia, for the Powering Prosperity Through Infrastructure Job Training project. The project will provide credentialed employer- POWER Award Summaries by State, October 2023 Page 24 approved training for seven high-demand occupations, including heavy and tractor trailer truck drivers, electrical power-line installers, telecommunications-fiberoptic installers, and transportation infrastructure inspectors. Project funds will modernize existing curricula, increase BridgeValley's capacity to train more students across its two campuses, increase completion rates by providing support services for participant retention, and engage industry partners in assessing program offerings and aligning them with employer needs. Through a partnership with Workforce West Virginia, local municipalities in Southeastern WV, and local employers, BridgeValley seeks to wrap support around current and future students for these new opportunities to train in high-demand fields. The project will serve up to 625 students with services for career preparation, support, and specialized training while they complete an industry credential program.



Project Title: Harnessing the Economic Power of the Elk River Trails

Grantee: Elk River Trail Foundation, Inc.

Award Amount: \$1,365,000

Announcement Date: October 2023

Project Summary: ARC grant of \$1,365,000 to the Elk River Trail Foundation, Inc., (ETRF) Elkview, West Virginia, for the Harnessing the Economic Power of the Elk River Trails project. In early 2022, the ETRF completed its ARC-funded Elk River Trails of West Virginia feasibility study detailing the opportunities for business and tourism infrastructure expansion along the Elk River. This project addresses each of the plan's priorities through a downtown facade program, expansion of the FASTER WV business technical assistance program, new wayfinding signage, and the construction of five water access points and four related trailheads in the towns of Sutton, Clendenin, Gassaway, and Clay. The project is expected to serve eight communities and over 42 businesses. Through its partnership with each Elk River POWER Award Summaries by State, October 2023 Page 25 Trail town, the Elk River Foundation, and Advantage Valley, this project will kickstart the implementation of the Elk River Trails of West Virginia plan and intentionally grow business and downtown development alongside the expansion of the Elk River Trail.

Project Title: Expanding West Virginia's Food System with Regional Entrepreneurship Centers and Innovative Business Streams

Grantee: West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition, Inc.

Award Amount: \$1,134,341

Announcement Date: October 2023

Project Summary: ARC grant of \$1,134,341 to the West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition, Inc., in Charleston, West Virginia, for the Expanding West Virginia's Food System with Regional Entrepreneurship Centers and Innovative Business Streams project. The project will provide healthy foods to childcare centers across 16 West Virginia counties through the expansion of West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition's "food production hub" network model. This project will also foster entrepreneurial activities by providing workforce development, nutrition and culinary training, technical assistance, and production planning to local farmers. Building on a pilot project with partners Project Healthy Kids; Healthy Kids, Inc.; KEYS 4 Healthy Kids; Random Rabbit, LLC; the West Virginia Association for Young Children; and Expand the Monongalia County Food Production Hub, the project will launch three new hubs in Kanawha, Taylor, and Greenbrier counties and expand the existing Monongalia County Hub. The hubs will serve as the entry point for small or beginning farmers to scale up before accessing the wholesale distribution, grocery, or institutional purchasing market. Project funding will also help market prepared meals and preserved products to hospitals, schools, private schools, childcare centers, clinics, recovery centers, senior centers, and assisted living facilities. The project is anticipated to serve 65 businesses, 16 communities, 40 workers, and 4,000 participants; create 30 jobs and retain 10 jobs; and leverage \$4,306,400 in private investment.

Project Title: Arts Business Accelerator

Grantee: Tamarack Foundation for the Arts, Inc.

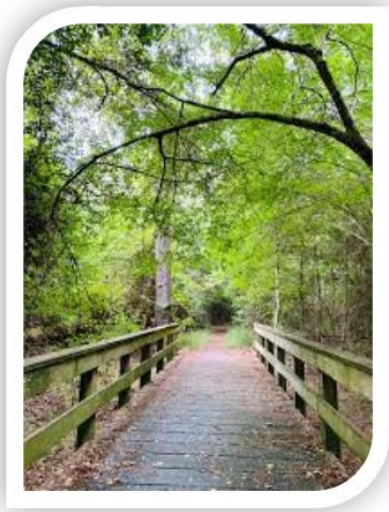
Award Amount: \$30,758

Announcement Date: October 2023

Project Summary: ARC grant of \$30,758 to Tamarack Foundation for the Arts, Inc., in Charleston, West Virginia, for the Arts Business Accelerator project. The project will provide arts businesses in southern West Virginia with financial literacy workshops and small business education, tools, and resources. With these



ARC planning funds, Tamarack Foundation for the Arts (TFA) will accomplish three main objectives: develop a three-year comprehensive Arts Business Accelerator Implementation Plan; investigate the need for additional levels of arts-based business education and creative entrepreneur support in the project service area using various methods of data collection; and research evidence-based, equitable, art-centered business education/creative entrepreneur programming in partnership with WV State University Extension. The project is anticipated to serve and improve 140 businesses and develop one comprehensive Arts Business Accelerator Implementation Plan.



Transportation Alternatives Grants

The Transportation Alternative grants are administered by the West Virginia Department of Transportation and funded by the Federal Highway Administration. The grants help towns and cities improve their network of recreational trails, biking/walking paths, sidewalks, and more, by either building from scratch or enhancing what they already have through various types of projects.

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVE GRANT AWARDS INFLUENCING REGION III:

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROJECTS:

KANAWHA COUNTY

City of Charleston - \$150,000

The City of Charleston has secured \$150,000 for Smith Street and Leon Sullivan Way for new and replacement sidewalks and new street lighting from Morris Street to Leon Sullivan Way along Smith Street.

Town of Marmet - \$650,000

The town of Marmet has received \$650,000 for Marmet Lens Creek Road Pedestrian Safety Improvements, including new and replacement sidewalks along West Virginia Route 61.



PUTNAM COUNTY

Town of Eleanor - \$350,000

The town of Eleanor has been awarded \$350,000 for Eleanor Park Sidewalk—Phase I. The funding will be used to build new sidewalks from the Eleanor Park entrance through the woods to the existing footbridge.

Town of Poca - \$460,000

The town of Poca has secured \$460,000 for the Poca Laurel Avenue Sidewalk Extension—Phase II, which will add a new sidewalk and complete the pedestrian connection between Route 63 and the Subdivision.

City of Winfield - \$350,000

The City of Winfield has received \$350,000 for the Winfield Sidewalk System—Phase I, which will include a sidewalk on the east side of Route 817 (Winfield Road) from Hawthorn Drive to Waterside Drive.

RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM PROJECTS:

KANAWHA COUNTY

Kanawha State Forest - \$100,000

West Virginia DNR Kanawha State Forest has received \$100,000 for Davis Creek Trail—Phase I, which will involve long-term rehabilitation and future extension of the Trail and bridges.

Mary Ingles Trail Blazer Chapter of the WV Scenic Trails Association - \$265,540

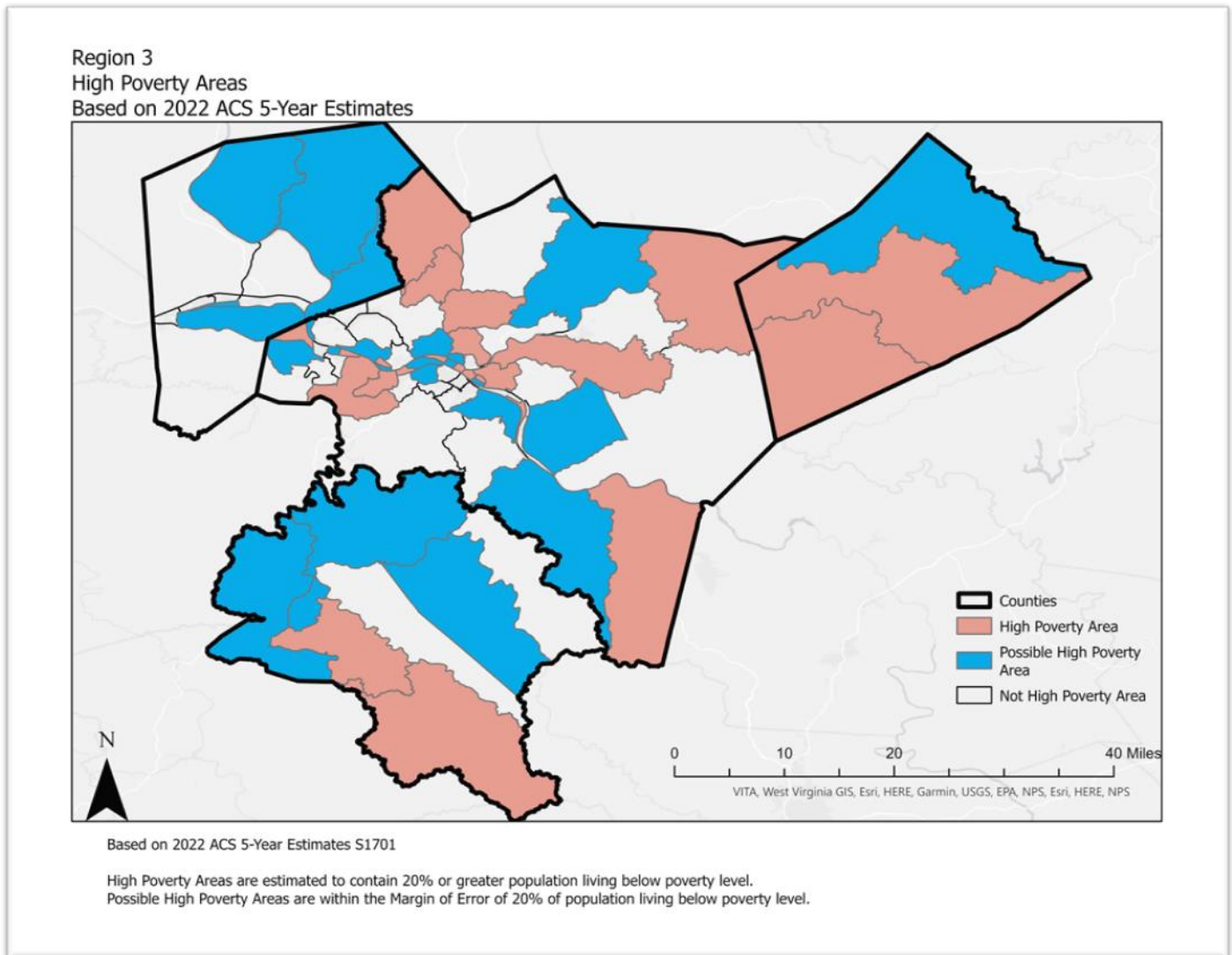
The Mary Ingles Trail Blazer Chapter of the WV Scenic Trails Association has been awarded \$265,540 for Marmet Locks: Mary Ingles Memorial Trail. The funding constructs approximately 3,700 linear feet of pedestrian primitive trail around Mt. Holly Lawn on the Marmet Locks and Dam.

**Projects above with total funding, including Federal funding, State funding, and sponsor match.*



Mapping Distressed Census Tracts in WV Region III

Region III High Poverty Areas

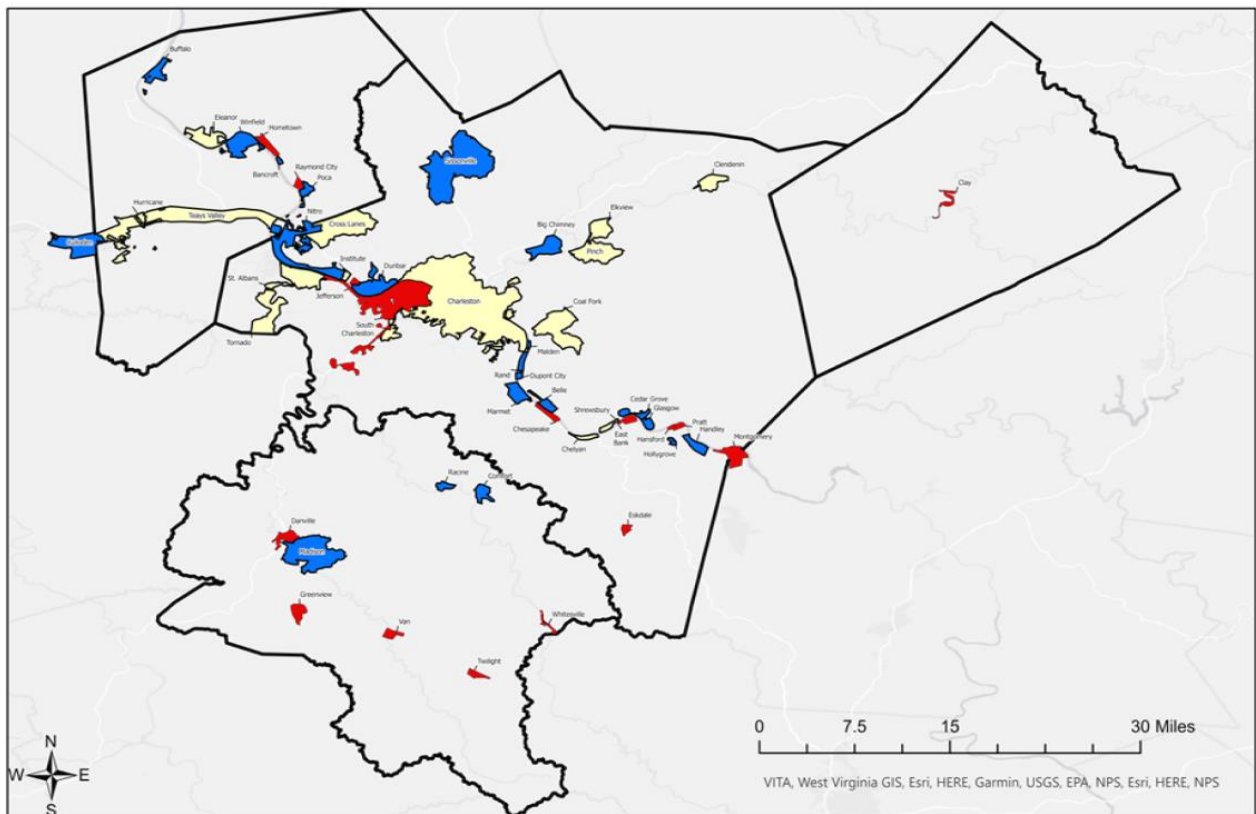




Region III

Percent of Population Living Below Poverty Municipalities & Census Designated Places

Percent of Population Living Below Poverty
Municipalities and Census Designated Places
2022 ACS 5-Year S1701



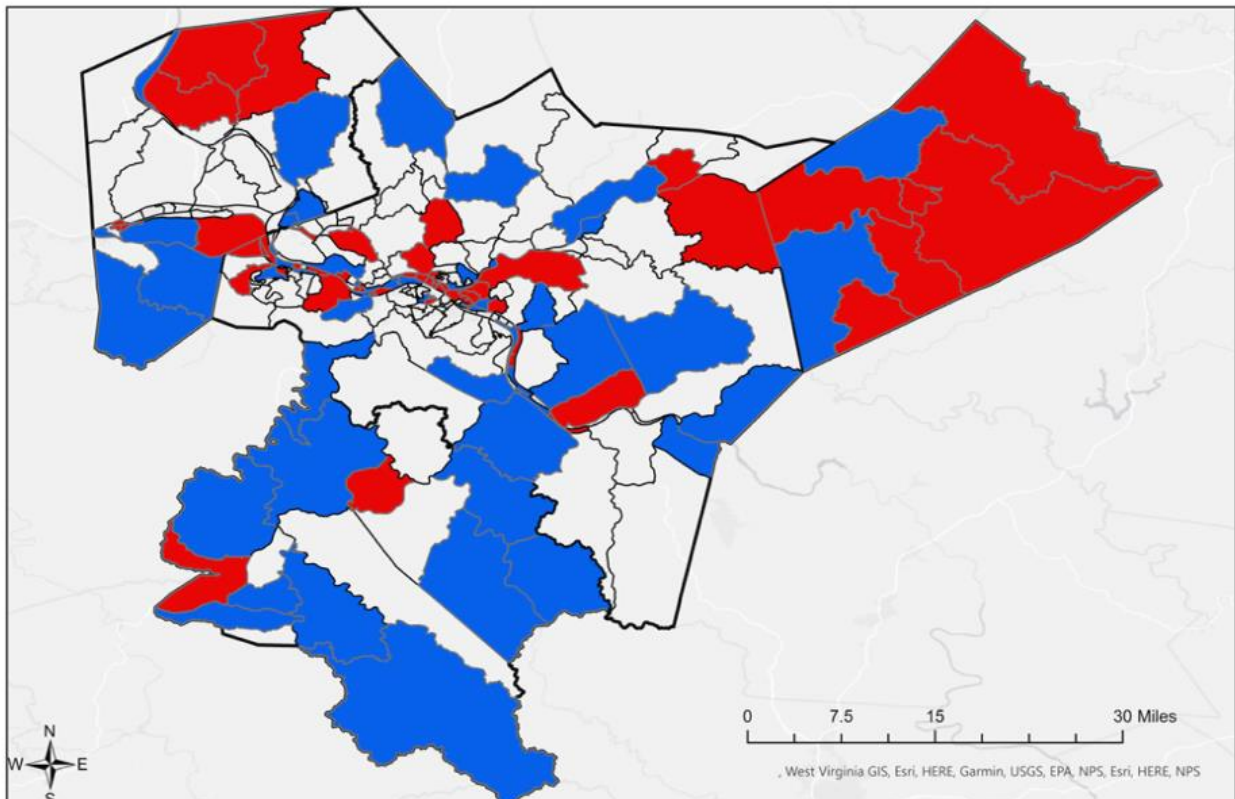
High Poverty Area - Percent of Population Living Below Poverty is 20% or Greater
 Possible High Poverty Area - Percent of Population Living Below Poverty Within Margin of Error of 20% or Greater
 Not High Poverty - Less than 20% of Population Living Below Poverty Line

■ Possible High Poverty Area ■ High Poverty Area
■ Not High Poverty Counties



Region III Low to Moderate Income Block Groups

Low to Moderate Income
Block Groups
Based on 2015 ACS 5-Year Data

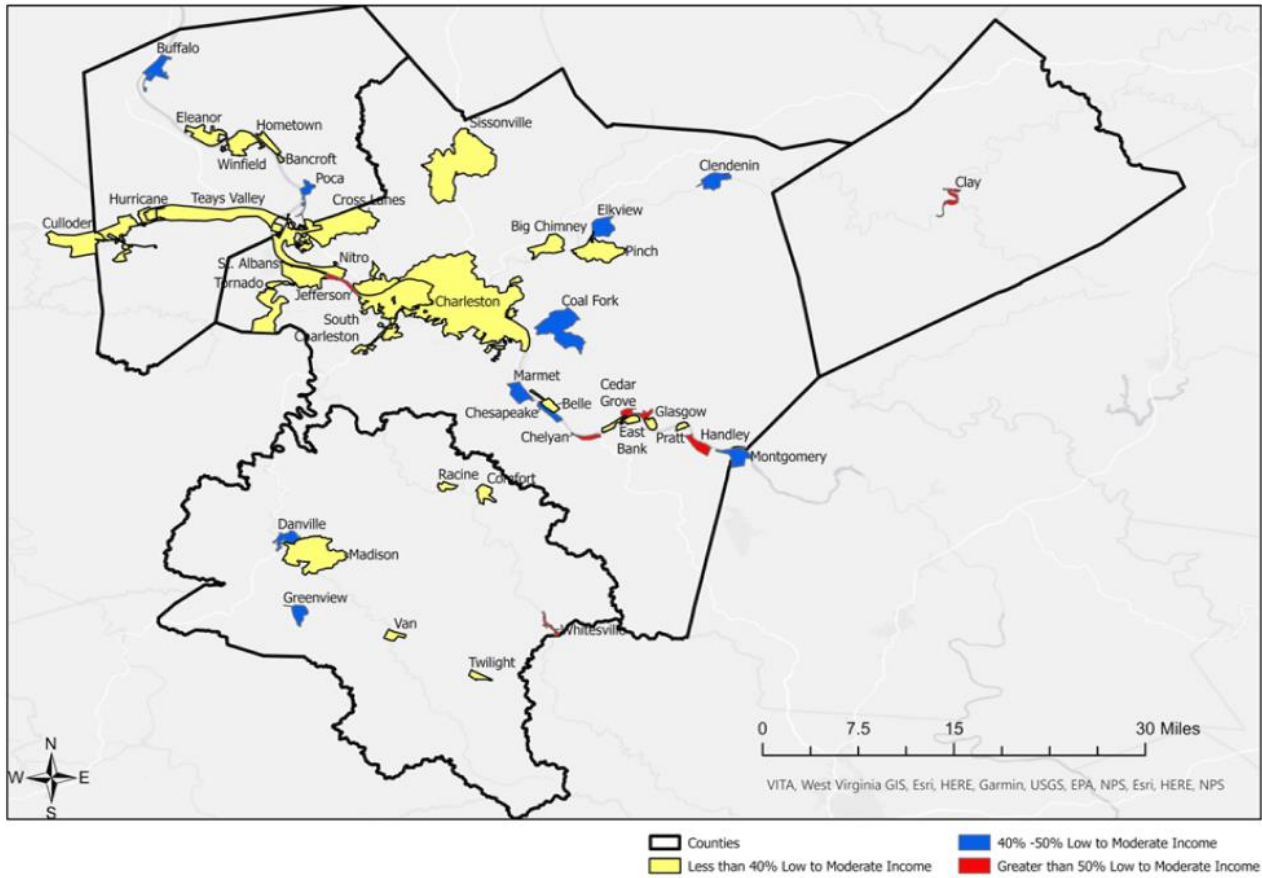


Counties
Less than 40% Low to Moderate Income
40% - 50% Low to Moderate Income
Greater than 50% Low to Moderate income



Region III Low to Moderate Income Municipalities & Census Designated Places

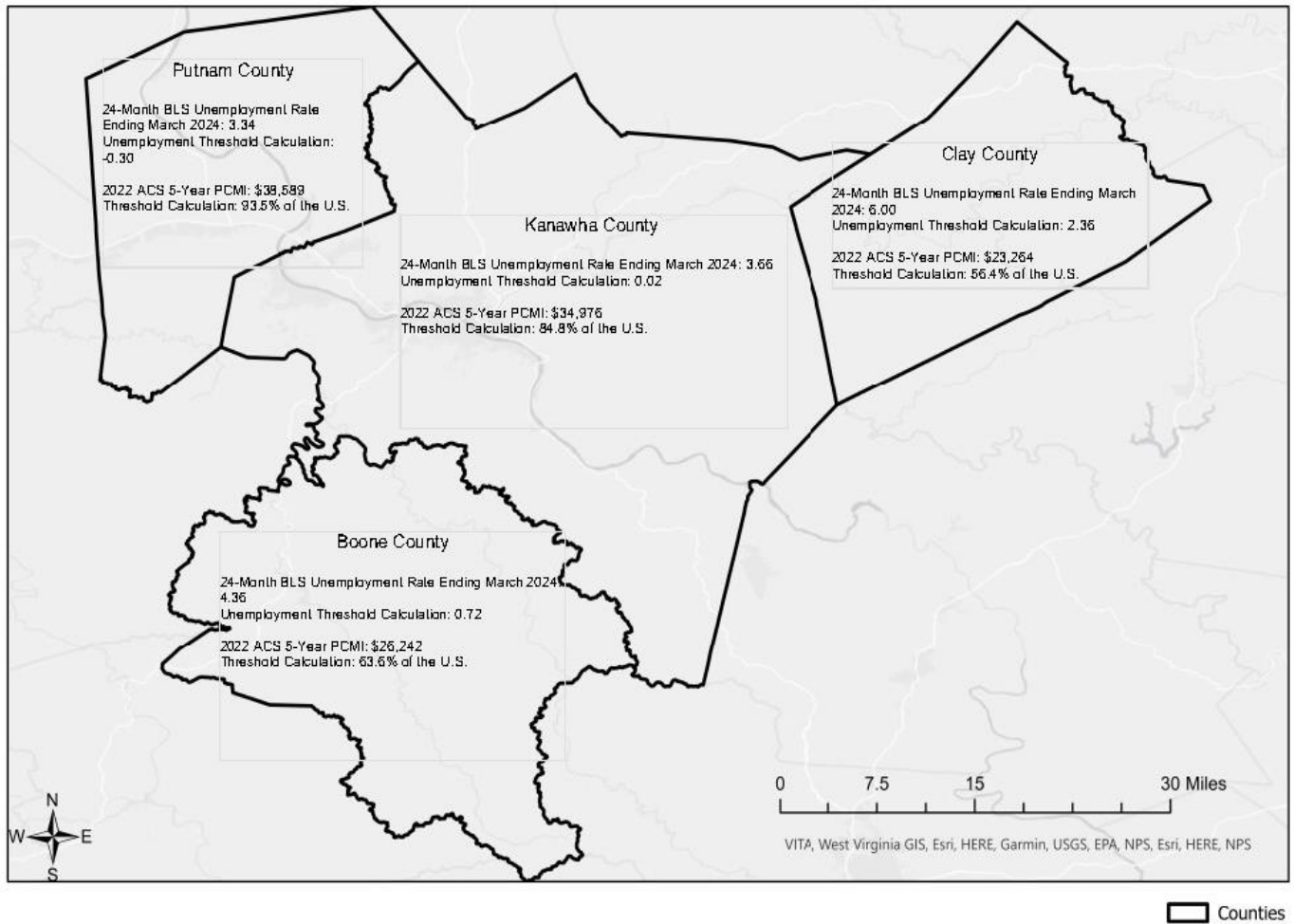
Low to Moderate Income
Municipalities and Census Designated Places
Based on 2015 ACS 5-Year Data





Region III County Level Data

Region 3
County Level Data
BLS 24-Month Unemployment Rate and ACS 5-Year PCMI





C. Regional Economic Analysis

Statistical information of the Region's economy helps identify strengths and helps focus efforts on building on these strengths. Educational attainment, young-adult population growth, high-tech employment and other statistics are all used to calculate the Innovation Index. The resulting measurement details a region's ability to adapt in the changing economy.

The Innovation Project is sponsored by U.S. EDA to develop simple tools that provide a characterization of a local economy. These tools can also help set the course for long-term growth in a region. The goal of these tools is to help planners assess their region's comparative strengths and weaknesses while fostering innovation-based growth.

The Regional Intergovernmental Council has utilized the Innovation Index to develop this Regional Economic Analysis.



Regional Innovation Index

The ability of a regional economy to innovate drives healthy growth; the innovation index takes an expansive look at indicators related to innovation from input and output perspectives.

The innovation index is comprised of six measures within a region and compares those at the national or state level.

The Innovation Index includes both innovation inputs and outputs in order to measure both innovation capacity and innovation outcomes.

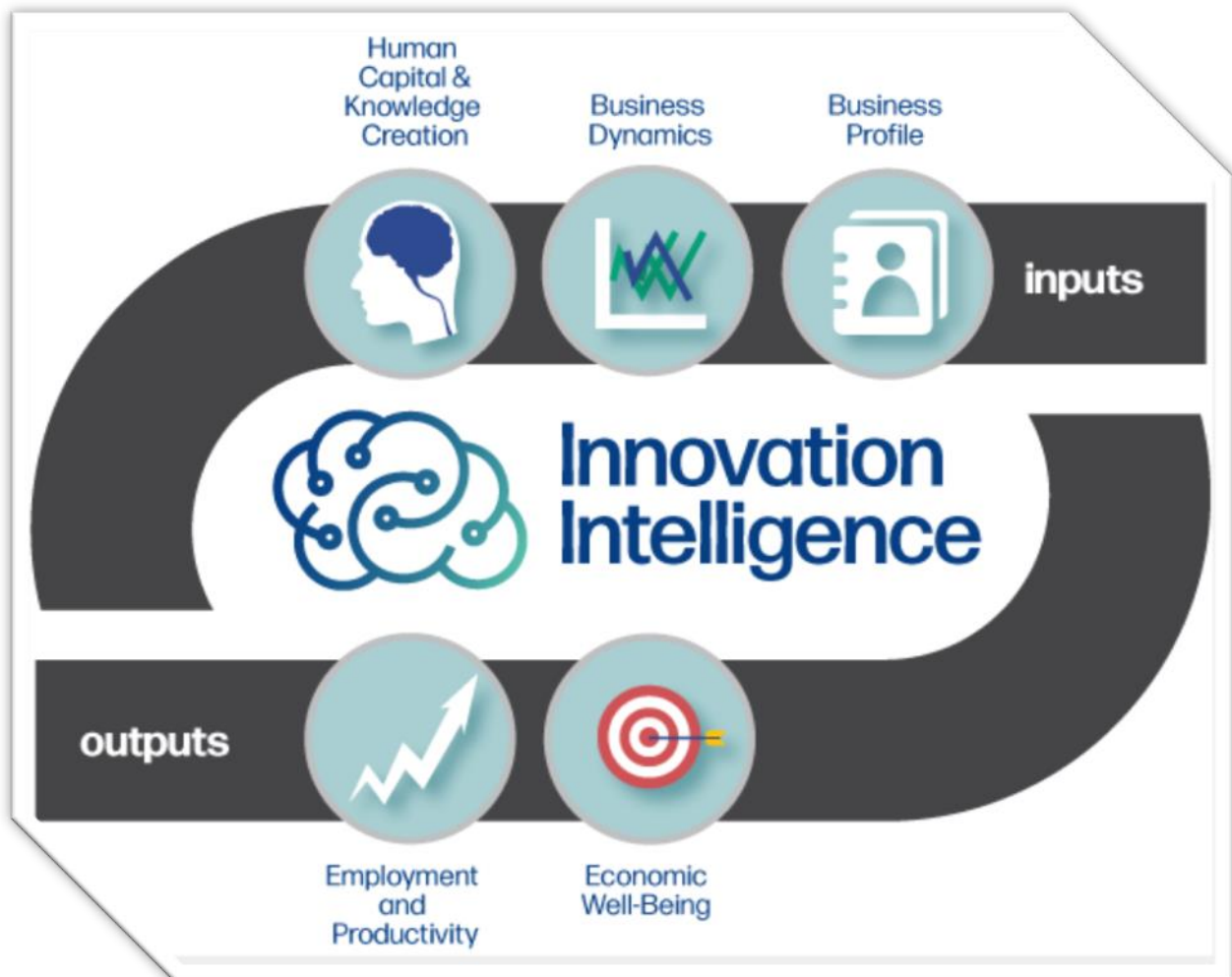
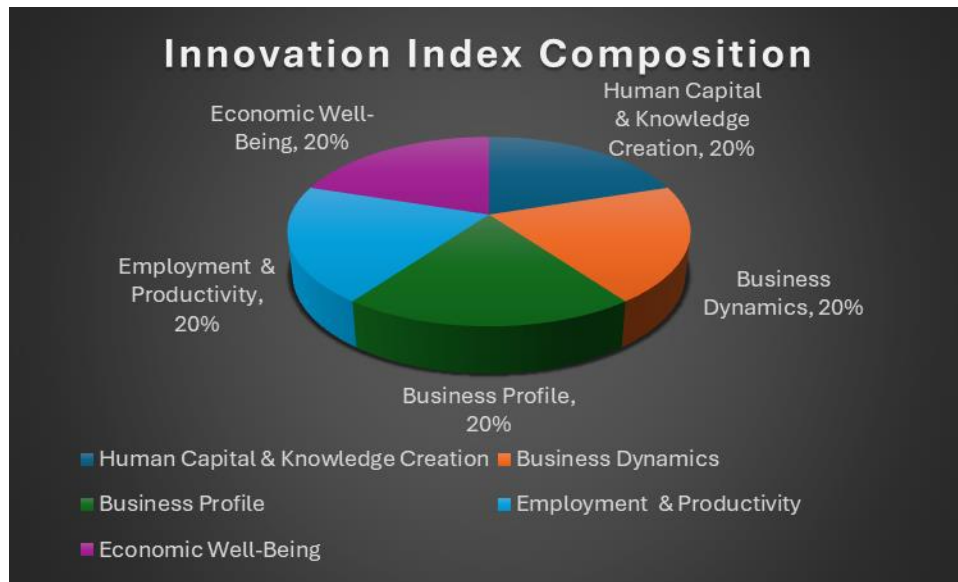


Chart obtained from Stats.America



- The **Human Capital & Knowledge Creation Index** suggests the extent to which a region’s population and labor force have the collective cognitive capacity and know-how to engage in innovative activities.
- The **Business Dynamics Index** gauges the competitiveness of a region by investigating the entry and exit of individual firms—the creative destruction measures.
- The **Business Profile Index** measures local business conditions and resources available to entrepreneurs and businesses.
- The **Employment & Productivity Index** describes economic growth, regional desirability, or direct outcomes of innovative activity.
- The **Economic Well-Being Index** explores standard of living and other economic outcomes.

Source: StatsAmerica

Based upon statistical analysis, several factors seem to be especially important for increasing economic growth: educational attainment; young-adult population growth; high-tech employment growth; and the number of small establishments.



The following graph illustrates the innovation index for the RIC Region III Planning and Development Council area compared to the State of West Virginia and, the United States. The index base for the United States is 200. The Innovation Index Score for RIC Region III has made a small increase to 95.5 up from 93.4 in the FY 2019 – 2023 CEDS.

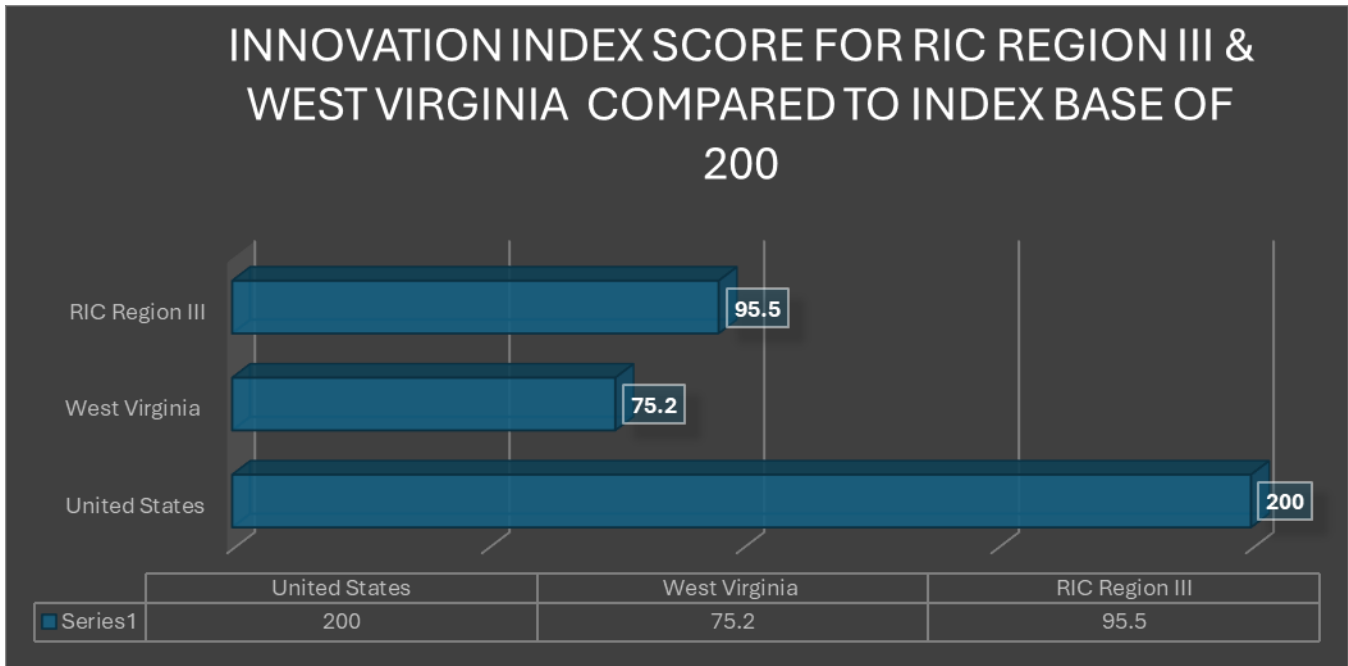


Chart data obtained from StatsAmerica

It is important to note; economies do not recognize political boundaries and each region will have a different mix of qualities that affect the overall innovation score.



The following graph and table will illustrate the individual county scores and the value of each component of the innovation index. The graph also provides the scores for the State of West Virginia and the United States for comparison. While the Region III innovation index is 95.5, the individual county index ranges from 86.3 to 114.7.

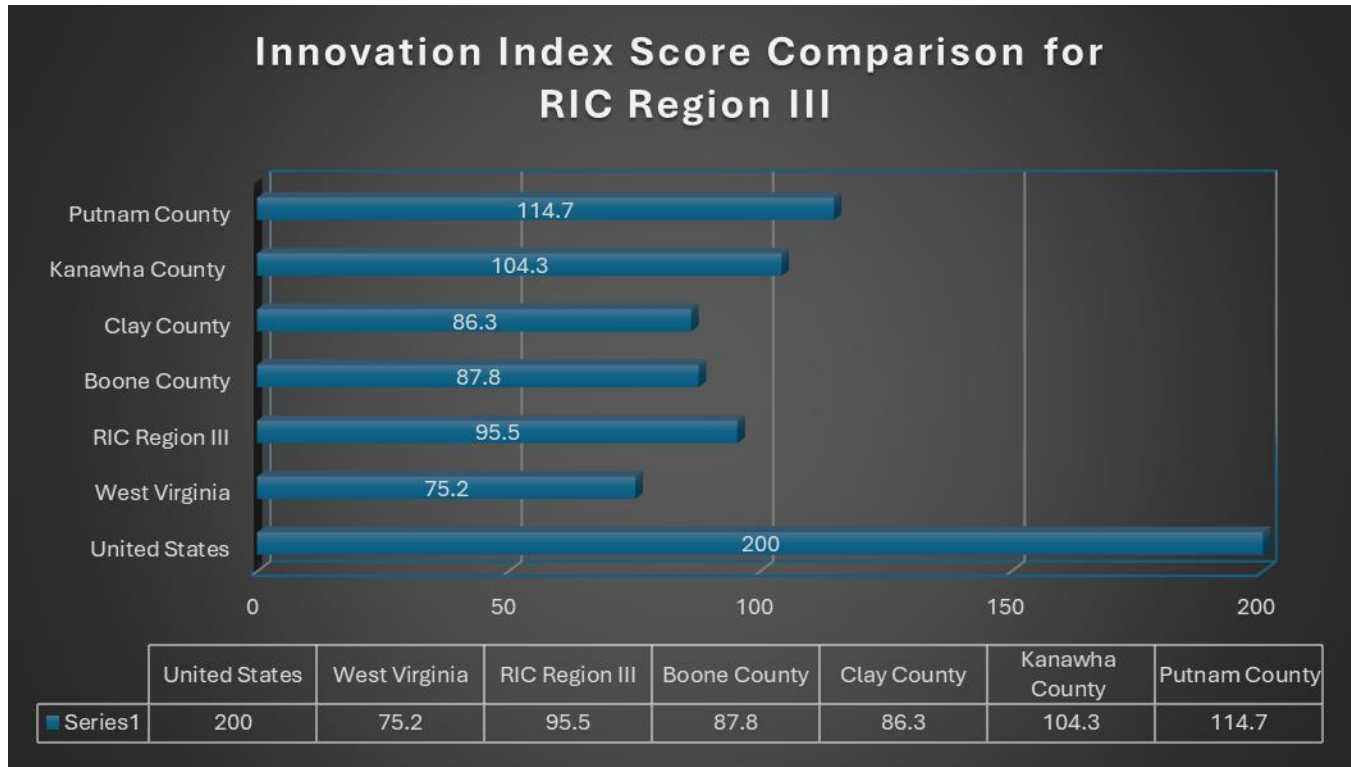


Chart data obtained from StatsAmerica


	Human Capital & Knowledge creation	Business Dynamics	Business Profile	Productivity and Employment	Economic Well-Being	Innovation Intelligence Index Score
Boone	76.2	85.5	69.1	98.9	109.1	87.8
Clay	82.2	100.2	65.8	94.5	88.8	86.3
Kanawha	111.0	106.2	71.8	123.7	109	104.3
Putnam	108.3	117.7	85.4	133.8	128.1	114.7
State of WV	76.4	58.2	79.9	81.7	80	75.2

Chart data obtained from StatsAmerica

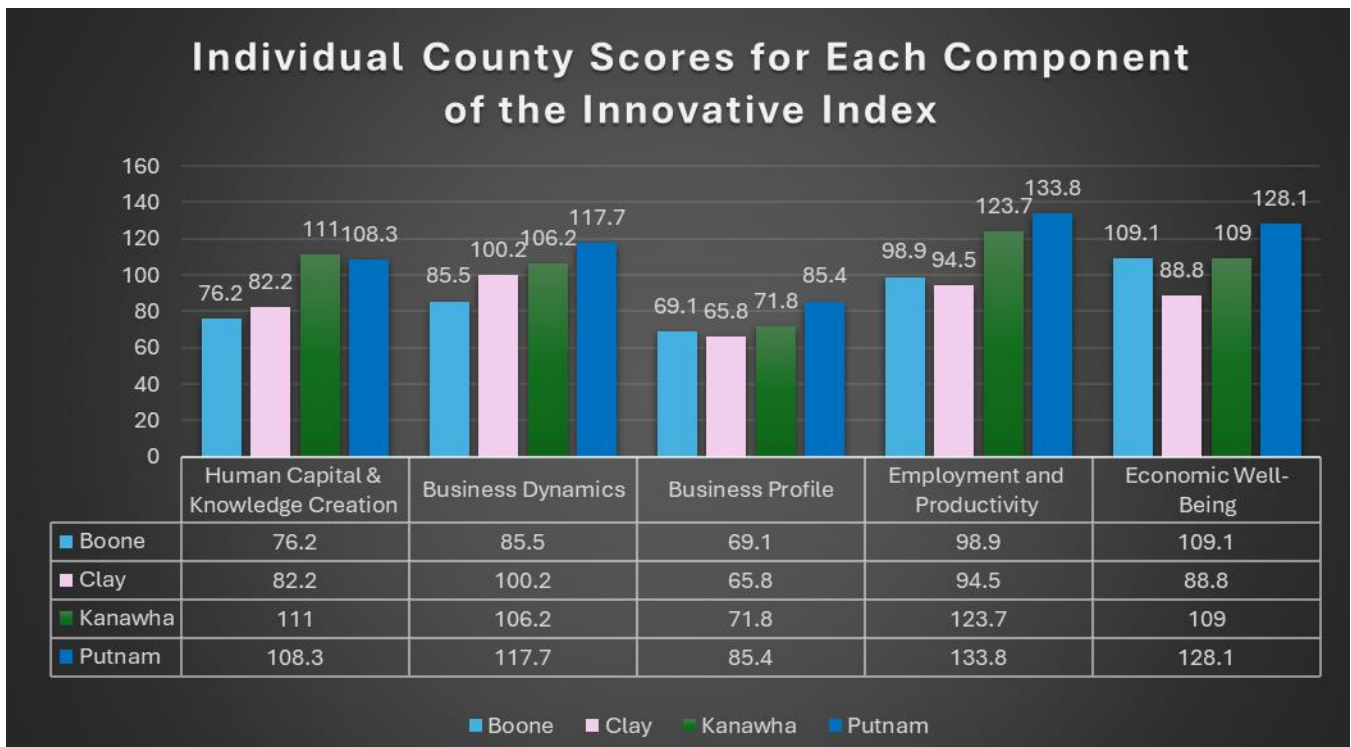


Chart data obtained from StatsAmerica



State of West Virginia

Population: **8,049** Per Capita Income: **\$38,450** Largest City: **Clay**

Innovation Intelligence Index Score 75.2

West Virginia has **low** relative Innovation Capacity. The innovation index incorporates statistical data from a wide variety of sources. The five index categories measured as well as key takeaways are included below.

Human Capital and Knowledge Creation Index Score 76.4

Key Takeaways

- The relative availability of human capital resources is low in this area.
- The top measures for this index are:
 1. University-Based Knowledge Spillovers
 2. High School Attainment

Business Dynamics Index Score 58.2

Key Takeaways

- Patterns of establishment formation and composition indicate a low level of business competitiveness.
- The top measures for this index are:
 1. Change in Establishment Births to All Establishment Ratio
 2. Average Small Establishments (per 10,000 Workers)

Business Profile Index Score 79.9

Key Takeaways

- The relative availability of resources for entrepreneurs and businesses is moderate in this area.
- The top measures for this index are:
 1. Change in Average Venture Capital Deals
 2. Change in Average Venture Capital

Employment and Productivity Index Score 81.7

Key Takeaways

- Industry performance in West Virginia indicates a moderate level of positive outcomes from existing economic activity.
- The top measures for this index are:



1. Change in Gross Domestic Product (per Worker)
2. Change in Share of High-Tech Industry Employment

Economic Well-Being Index 80.0

Key Takeaways

- As measured by residential internet connectivity and income, this area has a moderate standard of living.
- The top measures for this index are:
 1. Change in Proprietor Income (per Proprietor)
 2. Per Capita Personal Income Growth

Source: StatsAmerica



Boone County, WV

Population: 21,705 Per Capita Income: \$41,275 Largest City: Madison

Innovation Intelligence Index Score 87.8

Boone County has **low** relative Innovation Capacity. The innovation index incorporates statistical data from a wide variety of sources. The five index categories measured as well as key takeaways are included below.

Human Capital and Knowledge Creation Index Score 76.2

Key Takeaways

- The relative availability of human capital resources is low in this area.
- The top measures for this index are:
 1. Technology-Based Knowledge Occupation Clusters
 2. High School Attainment

Business Dynamics Index Score 85.5

Key Takeaways

- Patterns of establishment formation and composition indicate a moderate level of business competitiveness.
- The top measures for this index are:
 1. Jobs Attributed to Establishment Expansions to Establishment Contractions Ratio
 2. Average High-Tech, Early-in-Life-Cycle Establishment Ratio

Business Profile Index Score 69.1

Key Takeaways

- The relative availability of resources for entrepreneurs and businesses is moderate in this area.
- The top measures for this index are:
 1. Change in Proprietorship Rate
 2. Industry Diversity

Employment and Productivity Index Score 98.9

Key Takeaways

- Industry performance in Boone County, WV indicates a low level of positive outcomes from existing economic activity.
- The top measures for this index are:
 1. Average Gross Domestic Product (per Worker)
 2. Change in Share of High-Tech Industry Employment



Economic Well-Being Index Score 109.1

Key Takeaways

- As measured by residential internet connectivity and income, this area has a moderate standard of living.
- The top measures for this index are:
 1. Per Capita Personal Income Growth
 2. Income Inequality (Mean to Median Ratio)

Source: StatsAmerica



Clay County, WV

Population: 8,049 Per Capita Income: \$38,450 Largest City: Clay

Innovation Intelligence Index 86.3

Clay County has **moderate** relative Innovation Capacity. The innovation index incorporates statistical data from a wide variety of sources. The five index categories measured as well as key takeaways are included below.

Human Capital and Knowledge Creation Index Score 82.2

Key Takeaways

- The relative availability of human capital resources is low in this area.
- The top measures for this index are:
 1. Technology-Based Knowledge Occupation Clusters
 2. University-Based Knowledge Spillovers

Business Dynamics Index Score 100.2

Key Takeaways

- Patterns of establishment formation and composition indicate a low level of business competitiveness.
- The top measures for this index are:
 1. Jobs Attributed to Establishment Expansions to Establishment Contractions Ratio
 2. Average High-Tech, Early-in-Life-Cycle Establishment Ratio

Business Profile Index Score 65.8

Key Takeaways

- The relative availability of resources for entrepreneurs and businesses is moderate in this area.
- The top measures for this index are:
 1. Proprietor Income to Total Wages and Salaries Ratio
 2. Change in Proprietorship Rate

Employment and Productivity Index Score 94.5

Key Takeaways

- Industry performance in Clay County, WV indicates a low level of positive outcomes from existing economic activity.
- The top measures for this index are:
 1. Average Gross Domestic Product (per Worker)
 2. Change in Gross Domestic Product (per Worker)



Economic Well-Being Index Score 88.8

Key Takeaways

- As measured by residential internet connectivity and income, this area has a low standard of living.
- The top measures for this index are:
 1. Per Capita Personal Income Growth
 2. Income Inequality (Mean to Median Ratio)

Source: StatsAmerica



Kanawha County, WV

Population: 179,895 Per Capita Income: \$57,174 Largest City: Charleston

Innovation Intelligence Index Score 104.3

Kanawha County has **moderate** relative Innovation Capacity. The innovation index incorporates statistical data from a wide variety of sources. The five index categories measured as well as key takeaways are included below.

Human Capital and Knowledge Creation Index Score 111.0

Key Takeaways

- The relative availability of human capital resources is moderate in this area.
- The top measures for this index are:
 1. Graduate Degree Attainment
 2. Technology-Based Knowledge Occupation Clusters

Business Dynamics Index Score 106.2

Key Takeaways

- Patterns of establishment formation and composition indicate a moderate level of business competitiveness.
- The top measures for this index are:
 1. Change in Establishment Births to All Establishment Ratio
 2. Average High-Tech, Early-in-Life-Cycle Establishment Ratio

Business Profile Index Score 71.8

Key Takeaways

- The relative availability of resources for entrepreneurs and businesses is moderate in this area.
- The top measures for this index are:
 1. Industry Diversity
 2. Proprietor Income to Total Wages and Salaries Ratio

Employment and Productivity Index Score 123.7

Key Takeaways

- Industry performance in Kanawha County, WV indicates a moderate level of positive outcomes from existing economic activity.
- The top measures for this index are:
 1. Patent Diversity
 2. Average Gross Domestic Product (per Worker)



Economic Well-Being Index Score 109.0

Key Takeaways

- As measured by residential internet connectivity and income, this area has a low standard of living.
- The top measures for this index are:
 1. **Broadband Infrastructure and Adoption**
 2. **Per Capita Personal Income Growth**

Source: StatsAmerica



Putnam County, WV

Population: 8,049 Per Capita Income: \$38,450 Largest City: Clay

Innovation Intelligence Index Score 114.7

Putnam County has **moderate** relative Innovation Capacity. The innovation index incorporates statistical data from a wide variety of sources. The five index categories measured as well as key takeaways are included below.

Human Capital and Knowledge Creation Index Score 108.3

Key Takeaways

- The relative availability of human capital resources is moderate in this area.
- The top measures for this index are:
 1. High School Attainment
 2. Technology-Based Knowledge Occupation Clusters

Business Dynamics Index Score 117.7

Key Takeaways

- Patterns of establishment formation and composition indicate a moderate level of business competitiveness.
- The top measures for this index are:
 1. Traded Sector Establishment Births to Deaths Ratio
 2. Average High-Tech, Early-in-Life-Cycle Establishment Ratio

Business Profile Index Score 85.4

Key Takeaways

- The relative availability of resources for entrepreneurs and businesses is moderate in this area.
- The top measures for this index are:
 1. Industry Diversity
 2. Change in Proprietorship Rate

Employment and Productivity Index Score 133.8

Key Takeaways

- Industry performance in Putnam County, WV indicates a moderate level of positive outcomes from existing economic activity.
- The top measures for this index are:
 1. Change in Average Patenting Rate
 2. Patent Diversity



Economic Well-Being Index Score 128.1

Key Takeaways

- As measured by residential internet connectivity and income, this area has a moderate standard of living.
- The top measures for this index are:
 1. Average Poverty Rate
 2. Broadband Adoption Barriers

Source: StatsAmerica



Industries in RIC Region III

The following tables provide an overview of the industries within each County in Region III.

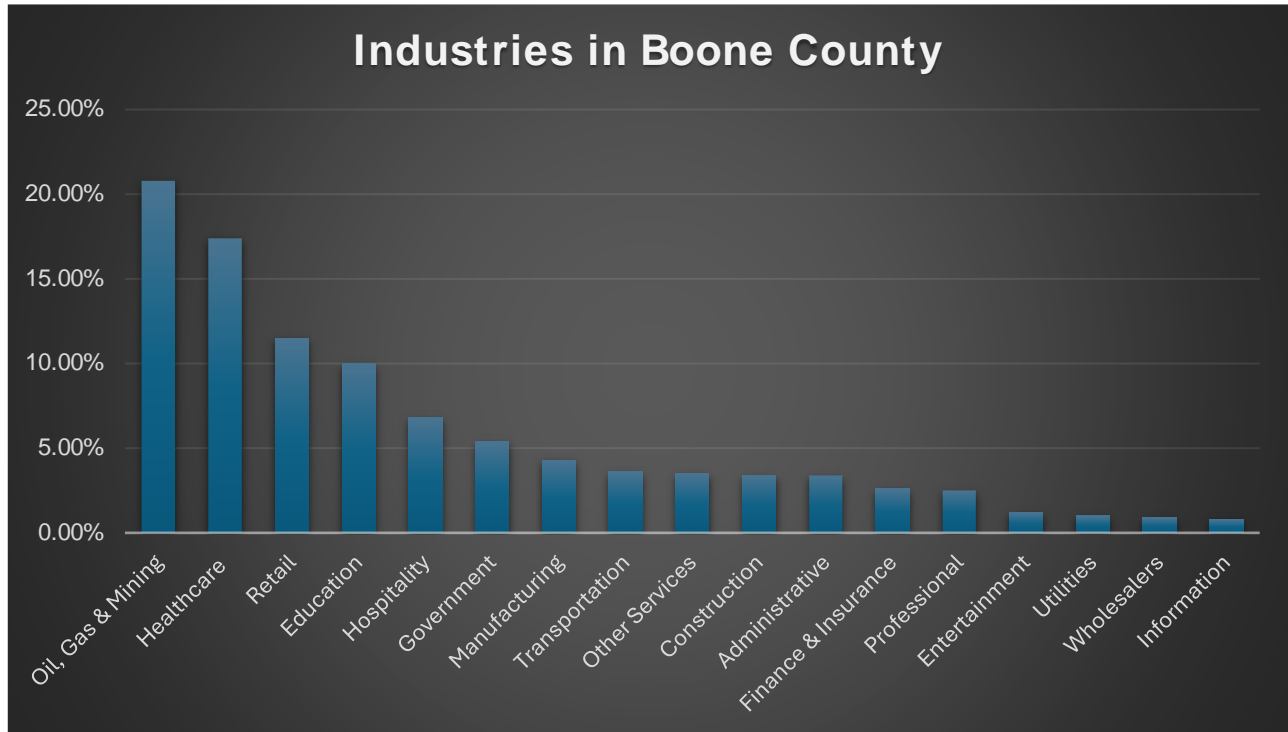


Chart data obtained from Statistical Atlas

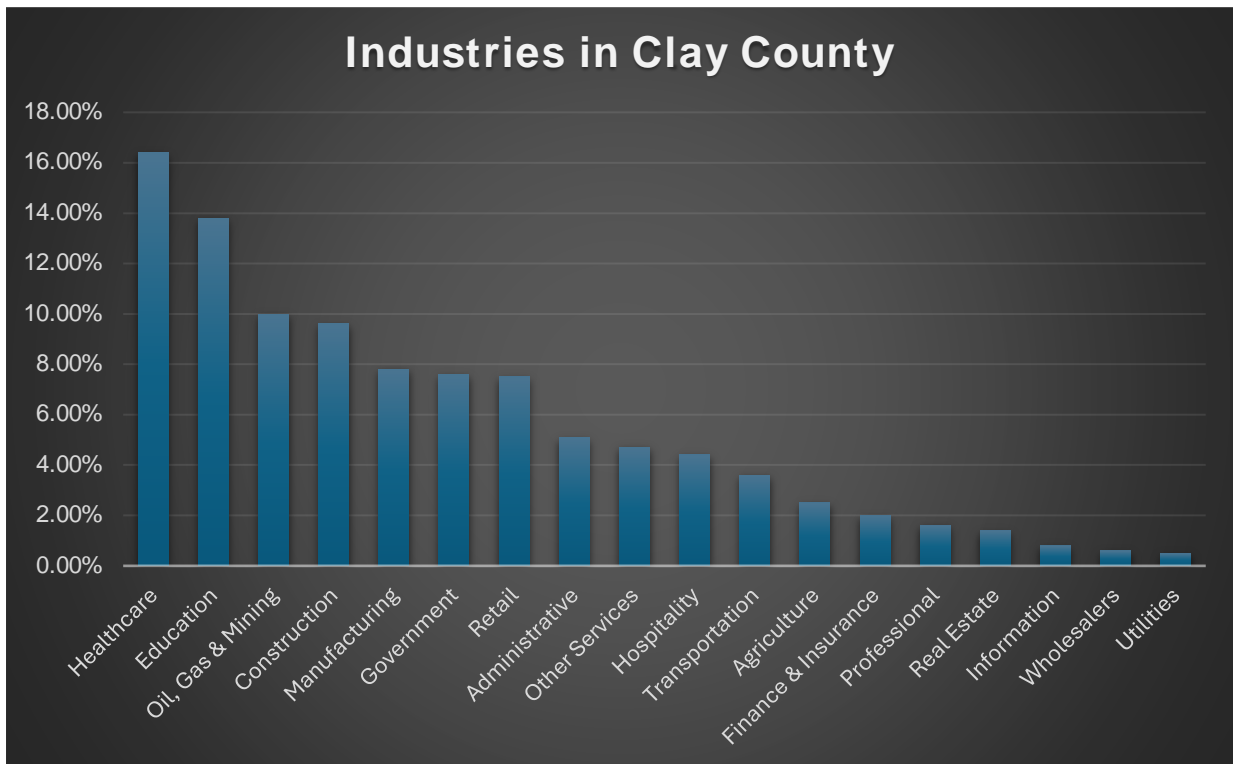


Chart data obtained from Statistical Atlas

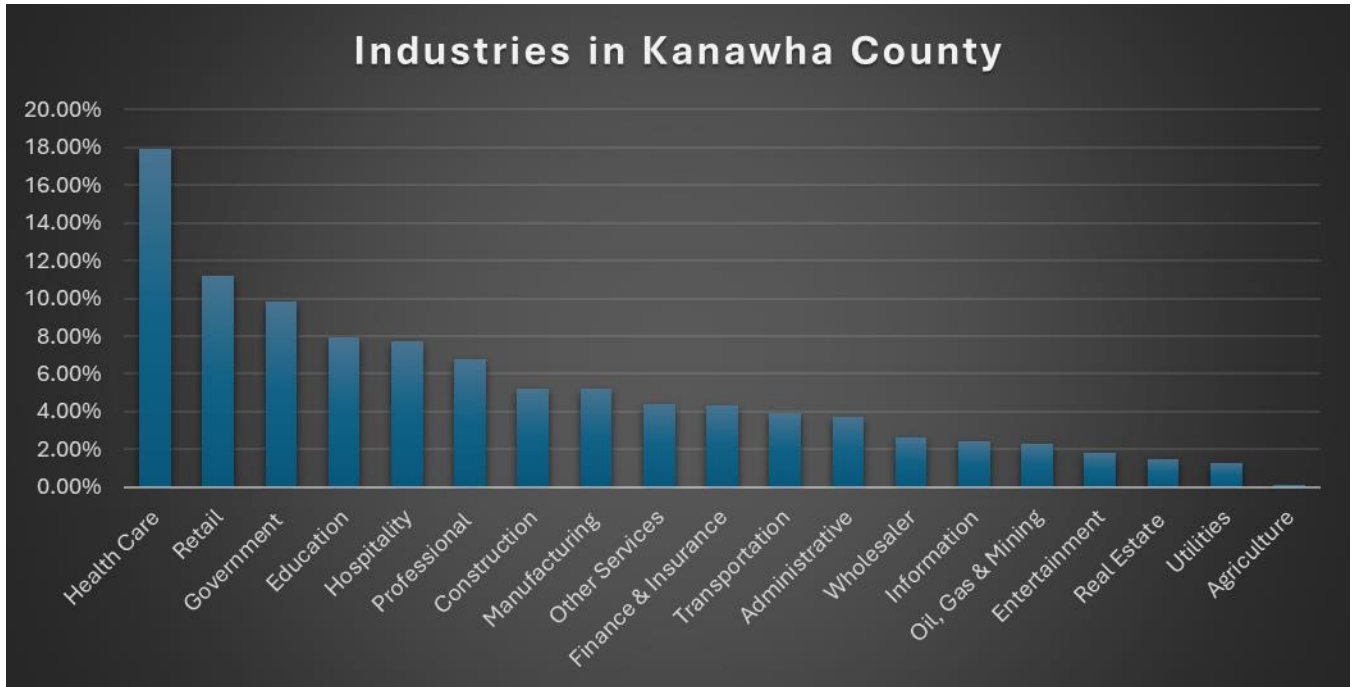


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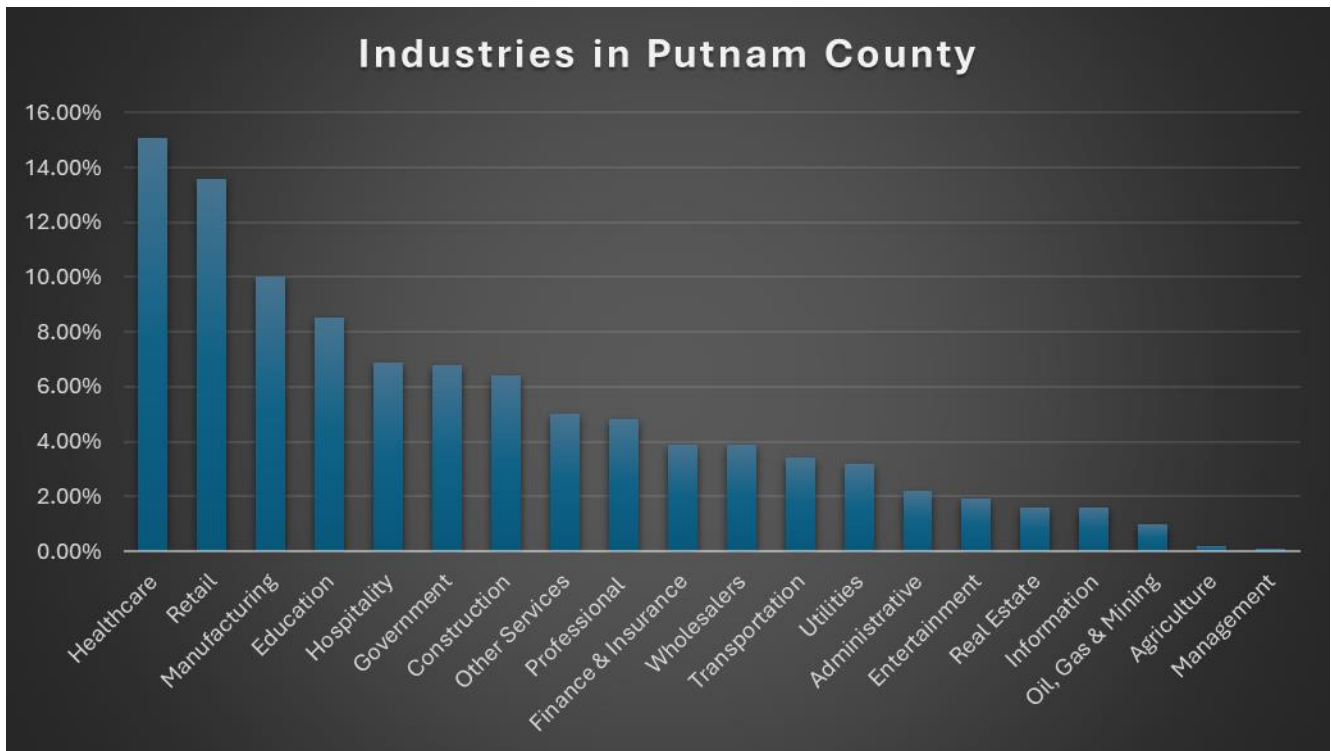


Chart data obtained from Statistical Atlas



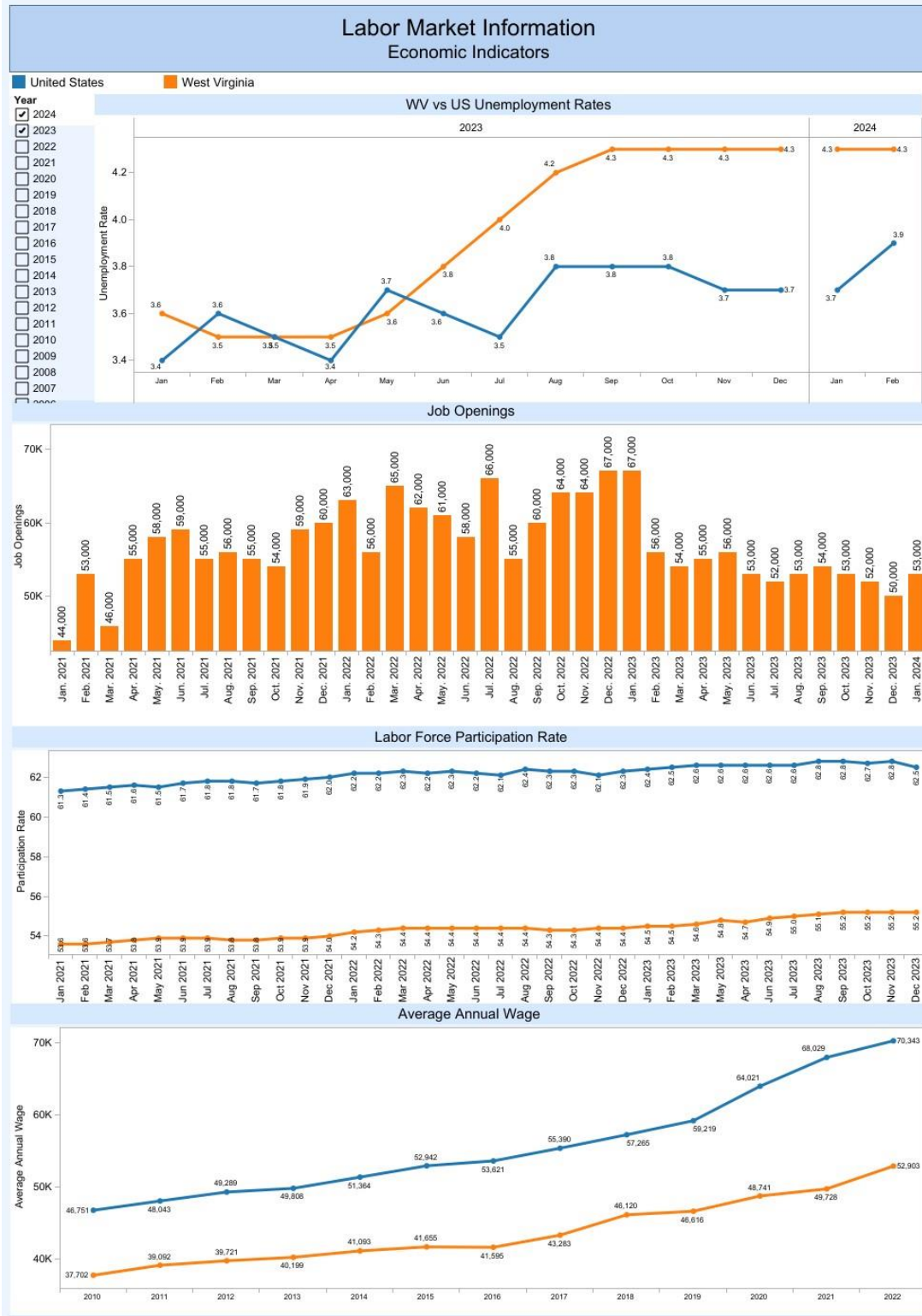
D. Labor Force Demographics

The table below displays the amounts of civilian labor force, total employment, total unemployment, and percentages of unemployment rates for each of the four counties in Region III. As of March 2024, the State of West Virginia had an unemployment rate of 4.9% compared to the national unemployment rate of 3.8%.

Civilian Labor Force

	Civilian Labor Force		Total Employment		Total Unemployment		Unemployment Rate	
	Mar 2023	Mar 2024	Mar 2023	Mar 2024	Mar 2023	Mar 2024	Mar 2023	Mar 2024
	Boone	6,900	7,260	6,650	6,860	250	390	3.6%
Clay	2,900	3,080	2,730	2,820	170	260	5.8%	8.5%
Kanawha	78,310	8,1720	75,680	78,070	2,630	3,650	3.4%	4.5%
Putnam	26,950	27,050	26,150	25,950	800	1,100	3.0%	4.1%

Information in table obtained from WorkForce West Virginia.



Information in charts obtained from WorkForce West Virginia.



E. Assessment of Progress in FY 2024

This section of the report captures details and descriptions of activities within each of the region's four counties.



BOONE COUNTY



Boone County Courthouse



Boone County was formed in 1847 from portions of Kanawha, Cabell, and Logan Counties. The County was named after Daniel Boone, a noted hunter and explorer, who made his home in the Great Kanawha Valley from 1788 to 1795. Located in southwestern West Virginia, Boone County borders Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, Wyoming and Raleigh Counties. Madison is the county seat, with three other municipalities of Danville, Whitesville and Sylvester, nearby. The Madison/Danville area of Boone County is approximately 37 miles south of Charleston. The county area is 503 square miles and lies in the Appalachian Plateau. Most of the area is divided by streams and water courses, which give the region the appearance of an endless formation of hills and contrasting valleys.

Distance to Major Cities from Madison, West Virginia

Atlanta.....	517 miles
Chicago.....	512 miles
Cincinnati.....	222 miles
Cleveland.....	281 miles
Columbus.....	241 miles
Lexington.....	181 miles
New York.....	560 miles
Pittsburgh.....	257 miles
Washington, DC.....	391 miles

TRANSPORTATION

Highways

One U.S. highway and two state highways serve Boone County. Providing service to Madison and Danville is U. S. 119 (Corridor G) which connects with Charleston, West Virginia and the State of Pennsylvania to the northeast; and with Logan and Williamson, West Virginia and the State of Kentucky to the south.

Public Transportation

Tri-River Transit in Hamlin, Lincoln County, provides limited local transit service in Boone County, with weekday trips to Southridge in Kanawha County. Other routes include Clothier to Madison and Wharton to Madison. The Boone County Community Organization provides various transportation services for senior services.

Rail Service

The CSX system supplies freight service to the communities in Boone County.

Air Service

The nearest commercial airport is West Virginia International Yeager Airport in Charleston, located 35 miles from Madison, the county seat of Boone County.

UTILILTIES



Water

Much to all of the water is supplied by West Virginia American Water Company through public-private partnership.

Electric

American Electric Power (AEP) provides electric power throughout Boone County.

Gas and Other

Natural gas is supplied by Ashford Gas, Southern Public Service Company, Pennzoil and Hope Natural Gas, Inc. Coal, fuel oil and propane are readily available from local suppliers.

Broadband

There are **10,739 Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs)** in Boone County, and an **estimated population of 20,576**.

- **86%** are Served (>100/20 Mbps): **9,240 BSLs**
 - Served* by Fiber: 32
 - Served* by Cable: 9,210
 - Served* by Copper: 0
 - Served* by Licensed Fixed Wireless: 165
- **2%** are Underserved (<100/20 Mbps): **257 BSLs**
- **12%** are Unserved (<25/3 Mbps): **1,242 BSLs**

List of Service Provider offerings:

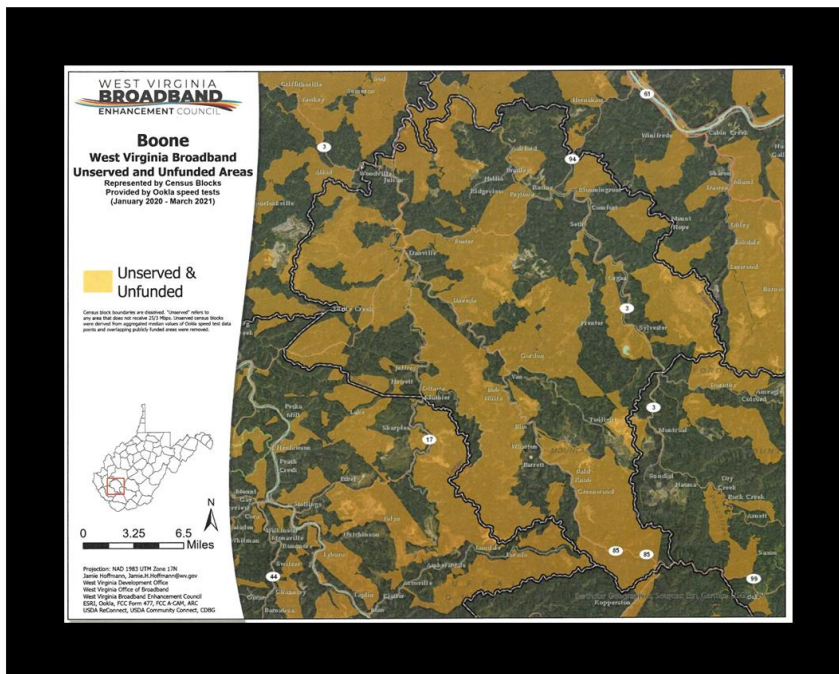
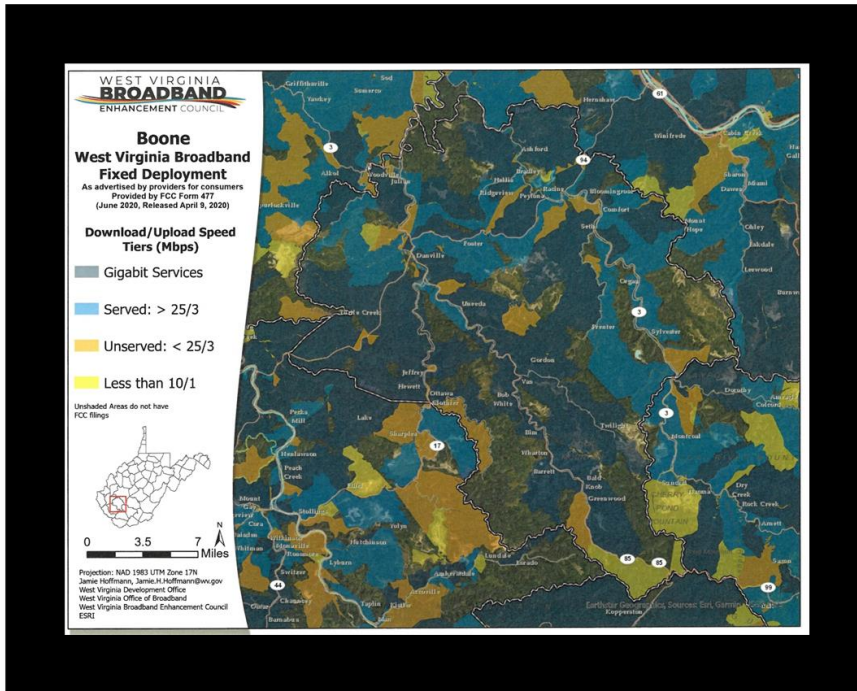
* Note - a BSL can be served by multiple providers and transmission technologies.

Technology	Provider	Total BSLs
Licensed Fixed Wireless	T-Mobile US	6,379
Cable	Optimum	6,182
Copper Wire	FRONTIER	5,388
Cable	Shentel	2,864
Licensed Fixed Wireless	VERIZON	584
Cable	ArmstrongUtilitiesInc	191
Unlicensed Fixed Wireless	Foster Communications LLC	148
Fiber	ArmstrongUtilitiesInc	19
Fiber	Optimum	12
Fiber	Glo Fiber Enterprise	1
Fiber	FRONTIER	1

Source: West Virginia Office of Broadband



Mapping of Broadband Fixed Development Download/Upload Speed and Unserved/Unfunded Areas in Boone County, provided by the West Virginia Broadband Enhancement Council.





The following “Quality of Life” facts exist in Boone County:

- Low crime rate
- County-wide 911 service and ambulance service
- 8 fully equipped volunteer fire departments
- Two National Blue-Ribbon Schools
- Three WV Schools of Excellence
- Hatfield-McCoy Trail Visitors’ Center
- Fully staffed hospital in Madison
- Nursing and Rehabilitation Center
- Housing Complexes for Seniors and the Elderly
- Public libraries in Madison, Whitesville, Wharton and Racine
- Public Transportation
- 8 Community and Recreational Centers
- Waterways Park
- County and Municipal Parks and Pools
- Fishing and Hunting Facilities
- National Mine Disasters Memorial
- National Historic District at Nellis
- Coal Heritage Museum in Madison
- County Courthouse on National Register of Historic Places
- Annual Festivals in Madison, Danville, Whitesville & Sylvester
- Miles of beautiful, scenic trails for outdoor, recreational use
- Four-lane Highway Access
- Thirty-minute drive to State Capitol
- Rail and Motor Carrier Freight Service
- 3-Mile Walking Trail in Madison to promote wellness

Economy

Boone County, an area that in the past relied and thrived primarily on coal production continues to look for new ways to revive their economy. The county is diversifying with job opportunities being created outside of the coal industry. Appalachian Corridor G, which runs through Boone County, promotes residential and commercial development. Tourism also brings business opportunities to Boone County, the county’s 70-mile section of the Hatfield-McCoy Recreation Trails offer outdoor recreational opportunities to off-road enthusiasts, including ATV riders and motorcyclists. Hundreds of kayak and canoe enthusiasts also tour the Walhonde Water Trail each year, which is recognized nationally as a premier water trail with several access points located in Boone County.

Despite these initiatives, the economy is still dependent on the coal industry and continues to work to identify new opportunities for economic growth. The unemployment rate has increased from 3.6% in March 2023 to 5.4% in 2024. Boone County has been designated by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) as “distressed”.



Boone County US Census Bureau Quick Facts	West Virginia	Boone County
Population estimates, July 1, 2023, (V2023)	1,770,071	20,576
Population estimates base, April 1, 2020, (V2023)	1,793,713	21,809
Population, percent change - April 1, 2020 (estimates base) to July 1, 2023, (V2023)	-1.30%	-5.70%
Population, Census, April 1, 2020	1,793,716	21,809
Population, Census, April 1, 2010	1,852,994	24,629
Persons under 5 years, percent	5.00%	5.00%
Persons under 18 years, percent	19.80%	20.40%
Persons 65 years and over, percent	21.20%	22.50%
Veterans, 2018-2022	114,894	1,328
Housing Units, July 1, 2023, (V2023)	863,745	10,161
Owner-occupied housing unit rate, 2018-2022	74.20%	79.10%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2018-2022	\$145,800	\$87,300
Median selected monthly owner costs -with a mortgage, 2018-2022	\$1,180	\$1,118
Median selected monthly owner costs -without a mortgage, 2018-2022	\$371	\$374
Median gross rent, 2018-2022	\$831	\$735
Households, 2018-2022	716,040	7,992
Persons per household, 2018-2022	2.43	2.7
Living in same house 1 year ago, percent of persons age 1 year+, 2018-2022	88.90%	93.60%
Households with a computer, percent, 2018-2022	88.80%	87.80%
Households with a broadband Internet subscription, percent, 2018-2022	82.70%	84.30%
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2018-2022	88.40%	84.40%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2018-2022	22.70%	11.70%
With a disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2018-2022	13.80%	17.00%
In civilian labor force, total, percent of population age 16 years+, 2018-2022	53.10%	43.80%
In civilian labor force, female, percent of population age 16 years+, 2018-2022	49.30%	41.40%
Total accommodation and food services sales, 2017 (\$1,000)	4,069,148	12,680
Total retail sales, 2017 (\$1,000)	23,057,778	214,448
Total retail sales per capita, 2017	\$12,678	\$9,587
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2018-2022	26.3	34.7
Median household income (in 2022 dollars), 2018-2022	\$55,217	\$56,182
Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2022 dollars), 2018-2022	\$31,462	\$26,242
Persons in poverty, percent	17.90%	18.50%
Total employer establishments, 2021	35,316	236
Total employment, 2021	519,122	3,923
Total annual payroll, 2021 (\$1,000)	24,261,040	198,158
Total employment, percent change, 2020-2021	-4.20%	8.20%
Total nonemployer establishments, 2021	91,015	669
Population per square mile, 2020	74.6	43.5
Population per square mile, 2010	77.1	49.1



Top Ten Employers in Boone County

1. Boone County Board of Education
2. Sev. En Energy
3. Boone Memorial Hospital, Inc.
4. Pro Careers Inc.
5. Hillcrest Health Care Center, LLC
6. Boone County Commission
7. OneSource Employee Management, LLC
8. Kroger Limited Partnership
9. Boone County Organization Association
10. WVDCR Department of Corrections Rehabilitation

Source: Workforce WV, March 2023



CLAY COUNTY



Historic Clay County Courthouse



Clay County was formed in 1858 from parts of Braxton, Kanawha and Nicholas counties. Named in honor of Henry Clay, a Kentucky statesman, Clay County is located in central West Virginia. The county area is 346.61 square miles, and the 2021 census estimate shows a population of 7,892. Most of the county has an elevation of 1,000 feet or greater above sea level. The county seat is the Town of Clay, located 42 miles from Charleston, West Virginia.

Distance to Major Cities from Clay

Atlanta.....	511 miles
Chicago.....	589 miles
Cincinnati.....	301 miles
Cleveland.....	294 miles
Columbus.....	205 miles
Lexington.....	222 miles
New York.....	509 miles
Pittsburgh.....	204 miles
Washington, DC.....	336 miles

TRANSPORTATION

Highways

Clay County is served by I-79, which provides service from Charleston, West Virginia to Erie, Pennsylvania and State Routes 36, 16 and 4.

Public Transportation

Clay County Development Corporation provides specialized transportation services primarily for the elderly in Clay County.

Air Service

Service to Clay County is provided by West Virginia International Yeager Airport, located about 46 miles from the Town of Clay.

Elk River Trail

The Elk River Trail currently stretches over 73 miles from Clendenin to Gassaway. The trail provides easy access to the Elk River for canoeing, kayaking or fishing and several beautiful waterfalls await along the trail. Thanks to its flat terrain, the Elk River Trail is perfect for all outdoor enthusiasts and those seeking a non-motorized connection between Elk River communities.

UTILITIES

Water

Water is provided by The Town of Clay, Clay County Public Service District, Clay-Roane Public Service District, and West Virginia American Water.



Electric

Elk Power, American Electric Power (AEP) and Allegheny Power provide electrical power to the area.

Gas and Other

Mountaineer Gas is the major provider.

Broadband

There are **4,792 Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs)** in Clay County and an **estimated population of 7,783**.

- **15% are Served (>100/20 Mbps): 704 BSLs**
 - Served* by Fiber: 34
 - Served* by Cable: 633
 - Served* by Copper: 0
 - Served* by Licensed Fixed Wireless: 40
- **8% are Underserved (<100/20 Mbps): 398 BSLs**
- **77% are Unserved (<25/3 Mbps): 3,690 BSLs**

List of Service Provider offerings:

* Note - a BSL can be served by multiple providers and transmission technologies.

Technology	Provider	Total BSLs
Copper Wire	FRONTIER	1,681
Licensed Fixed Wireless	T-Mobile US	1,637
Licensed Fixed Wireless	UNITED STATES CELLULAR CORPORATION	863
Cable	Optimum	633
Fiber	FRONTIER	35
Fiber	Optimum	3

Source: West Virginia Office of Broadband



The following “Quality of Life” facts exist in Clay County:

- Two county-wide ambulance services
- Fully equipped volunteer fire department
- One national Blue-Ribbon school
- Public Library
- Primary Health Care Center
- Nursing and Rehabilitation Center
- Clay County Wellness Center
- Annually held events include the Golden Delicious Apple Festival, the July 4th celebration, and Agricultural Fair.
- County and Municipal Park and Pool
- Fishing, swimming and canoeing is available on the Elk River
- J. G. Bradley Campground
- Buffalo and Gauley Creek Scenic Railroad
- Buffalo Creek Recreational Trail
- Within 1 hour of State Capitol

Economy

Clay County is the poorest county within Region III. Clay County has been designated by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) as “distressed”. The unemployment rate remains high in Clay County. Economic challenges include its relative inaccessibility, absence of developable land and a lack of broadband internet service. The Clay County Board of Education is the top employer in the county.

Clay County is included in a federally designated Enterprise Community, named the Central Appalachia Empowerment Zone of West Virginia (CAEZ), and as such, is entitled to increased state and federal grant assistance. In the application for funding as a Rural Empowerment Zone, the following five areas of need are highlighted: 1) Economic Development; 2) Education; 3) Housing; 4) Health and 5) Emergency Services.

As a result of CAEZ, the following improvements in the education system have occurred: pre-school programs have been placed at elementary schools and the implementation of programs such as work training education at Clay County High School. Additional improvements are expected in the future.



Clay County US Census Bureau Quick Facts	West Virginia	Clay County
Population estimates, July 1, 2023, (V2023)	1,770,071	7,783
Population estimates base, April 1, 2020, (V2023)	1,793,713	8,047
Population, percent change - April 1, 2020 (estimates base) to July 1, 2023, (V2023)	-1.30%	-3.30%
Population, Census, April 1, 2020	1,793,716	8,051
Population, Census, April 1, 2010	1,852,994	9,386
Persons under 18 years, percent	19.80%	21.90%
Persons 65 years and over, percent	21.20%	22.40%
Veterans, 2018-2022	114,894	558
Housing Units, July 1, 2023, (V2023)	863,745	3,975
Owner-occupied housing unit rate, 2018-2022	74.20%	81.80%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2018-2022	\$145,800	\$100,800
Median selected monthly owner costs -with a mortgage, 2018-2022	\$1,180	\$945
Median selected monthly owner costs -without a mortgage, 2018-2022	\$371	\$300
Households, 2018-2022	716,040	2,865
Persons per household, 2018-2022	2.43	2.78
Living in same house 1 year ago, percent of persons age 1 year+, 2018-2022	88.90%	93.60%
Households with a computer, percent, 2018-2022	88.80%	83.10%
Households with a broadband Internet subscription, percent, 2018-2022	82.70%	80.60%
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2018-2022	88.40%	83.30%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2018-2022	22.70%	12.60%
With a disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2018-2022	13.80%	17.40%
In civilian labor force, total, percent of population age 16 years+, 2018-2022	53.10%	44.60%
In civilian labor force, female, percent of population age 16 years+, 2018-2022	49.30%	40.10%
Total accommodation and food services sales, 2017 (\$1,000)	4,069,148	1,660
Total health care and social assistance receipts/revenue, 2017 (\$1,000)	15,236,903	10,312
Total retail sales, 2017 (\$1,000)	23,057,778	38,639
Total retail sales per capita, 2017	\$12,678	\$4,439
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2018-2022	26.3	37.8
Median household income (in 2022 dollars), 2018-2022	\$55,217	\$41,530
Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2022 dollars), 2018-2022	\$31,462	\$23,264
Persons in poverty, percent	17.90%	23.80%
Total employer establishments, 2021	35,316	67
Total employment, 2021	519,122	771
Total annual payroll, 2021 (\$1,000)	24,261,040	25,553
Total employment, percent change, 2020-2021	-4.20%	-8.60%
Total nonemployer establishments, 2021	91,015	349
All employer firms, Reference year 2017	24,430	94
Population per square mile, 2020	74.6	23.5
Population per square mile, 2010	77.1	27.5



Top 10 Employers in Clay County

1. Clay County Board of Education
2. Consol Mining Company, LLC
3. Clay Health Care Center
4. Clay Senior & Community Services
5. Screaming Eagle Coal, LLC
6. Community Care of West Virginia
7. C. S. Masonry, LLC
8. Advantage Home Care, LLC
9. Clay County Commission & Clay County Services Unlimited, Inc.
10. West Virginia Department of Highways

Source: Workforce WV, March 2023



KANAWHA COUNTY



Kanawha County Courthouse



Kanawha County combines the scenic beauty of the Appalachian Mountains with the developmental potential provided by a major river system and mild climate. It is the largest county in the region with a population of 174,805 as of July 2023. The Kanawha River Valley provides much of the flat land used for development in the area. In addition, the Elk River and Coal River serve Kanawha County. In Charleston, the Kanawha River lies 600 feet above sea level. Kanawha County is 913 square miles in size. The area’s geographical location and surrounding mountains insulate it from tornadoes and hurricanes.

Distance to Major Cities from Charleston

Atlanta.....	504 miles
Chicago.....	541 miles
Cincinnati.....	200 miles
Cleveland.....	252 miles
Columbus.....	167 miles
Lexington.....	178 miles
New York.....	530 miles
Pittsburgh.....	227 miles
Washington, DC.....	361 miles

Transportation

Highways

Three major interstates serve the Kanawha Valley: I-64, I-79, and I-77.

Completed or Planned Highway Improvements:

- **WV 601 (Jefferson Road) Improvements in South Charleston:** Construction of the project is in progress. Once complete, the project will promote economic vitality and improve access to surrounding businesses, attractions, employment centers, and public places of interest. Construction of the project is expected to be completed over four phases.
 - Widen to five lanes between Kanawha Turnpike and Corridor G
 - A connector road from RHL Blvd. at Trace Fork Shopping Center to Jefferson Road is complete.
 - Construct a flyover bridge over CSX mainline tracks and Kanawha Turnpike.
 - Construct a roundabout at the intersection of Kanawha Turnpike and WV 601 (Jefferson Road)

Funding Source: Funded through federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds and the State Road Fund.
 Cost: \$60 million
- **Nitro-St. Albans I-64 Improvement Project:** The I-64 Improvement Project, currently in the construction phase, is a multi-year project that will widen I-64 from the US 35/I-64 Interchange to just



east of the Nitro Interchange. The project aims to alleviate congestion at the former four lane bridge bottleneck, found in between two six lane portions of interstate.

Funding Source: General Obligation Bonds and federal highway reimbursement.
Cost: \$245 million

Public Transportation

The Kanawha Valley Regional Transportation Authority (KRT) serves Kanawha County and portions of Fayette and Putnam Counties. KRT operates a network of 20 fixed routes oriented around the commercial center of Charleston. Except for four holidays, service is provided seven days a week. The earliest routes begin at 4:25am and service continues until 12:55am the next day. Complementary paratransit service, known as Kanawha Alternative Transit (KAT), operates during the same days and hours.

Rail Service

Rail freight service is supplied by CSX, on the southern side of the Kanawha River, making multiple trips day and night. The Norfolk-Southern on the northern side of Kanawha River, operating less often.

Passenger rail service is available by Amtrak through the Cardinal Route. The Charleston, WV Amtrak station sits on the south bank of the Kanawha River, opposite downtown Charleston.

Cardinal Route Information:

Connecting New York, Washington, Charlottesville, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, and Chicago
26 hours 30 minutes

Departures Three Days a Week

The Cardinal operates between New York and Chicago, offering unforgettable views of the Southeast's stunning natural beauty. You'll see gently rolling horse country, the Blue Ridge and Allegheny Mountains, the Shenandoah Valley, and the wild white-water rivers of West Virginia as they can only be seen by train. Heading westward, the train rolls along the banks of the mighty Ohio River — from the quaint towns of Ashland and Maysville, to the skyline of Cincinnati. From there, your journey continues to Indianapolis, and then northward to Chicago.

Air Service

West Virginia International Yeager Airport in Charleston offers competitive airfares to destinations throughout the world and nonstop flights to six major cities. The airport is a short drive from downtown Charleston and only a few minutes from the intersection of three major interstates. West Virginia International Yeager Airport serves as a U.S. Customs Port of Entry and has 4 major airlines: American Airlines, United Airlines, Delta Airlines, and Breeze. The following destinations are

- Charlotte, NC (CLT)
- Washington, DC (Washington Reagan) (DCA)
- Chicago, IL (ORD)
- Atlanta, GA (ATL)
- Orlando, FL (MCO)
- Tampa, FL (TPA)



- Myrtle Beach (MYR)

Elk River Trail

The Elk River Trail currently stretches over 73 miles from Clendenin to Gassaway. The trail provides easy access to the Elk River for canoeing, kayaking, or fishing and several beautiful waterfalls await along the trail. Thanks to its flat terrain, the Elk River Trail is perfect for all outdoor enthusiasts and those seeking a non-motorized connection between Elk River communities.

UTILITIES

Water

West Virginia American Water provides water throughout most of Kanawha County. There are also a number of municipal providers and Public Service Districts.

Electric

American Electric Power (AEP) provides electrical power throughout Kanawha County.

Gas and Other

Natural gas is supplied by Mountaineer Gas. Coal, fuel oil and propane are readily available from local suppliers.

Broadband

There are **84,403 Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs)** in Kanawha County, and an **estimated population of 174,805**.

- **94% are Served (>100/20 Mbps): 78,968 BSLs**
 - Served* by Fiber: 20,492
 - Served* by Cable: 78,535
 - Served* by Copper: 0
 - Served* by Licensed Fixed Wireless: 7,730
- **1% are Underserved (<100/20 Mbps): 722 BSLs**
- **6% are Unserved (<25/3 Mbps): 4,713 BSLs**



List of Service Provider offerings:

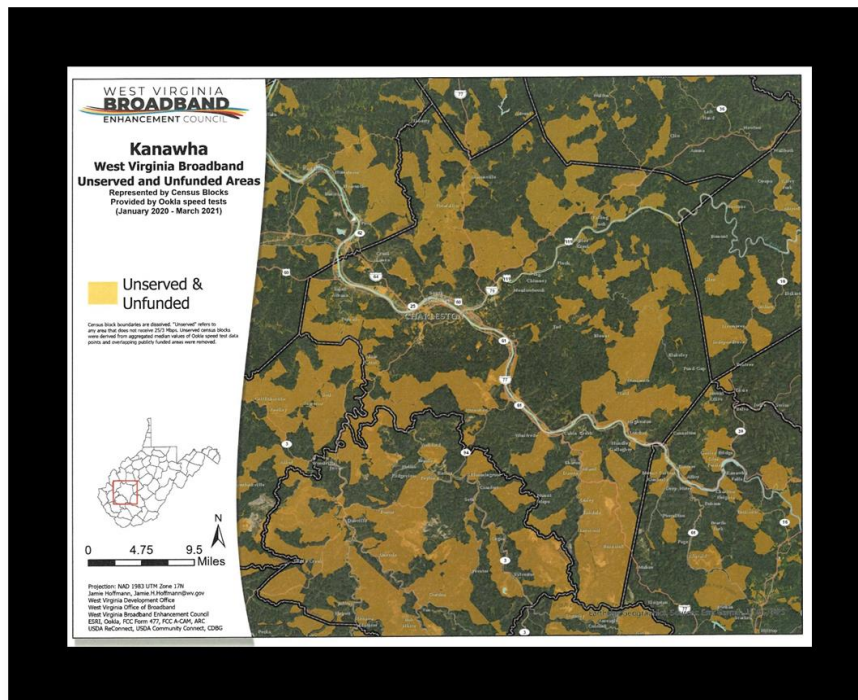
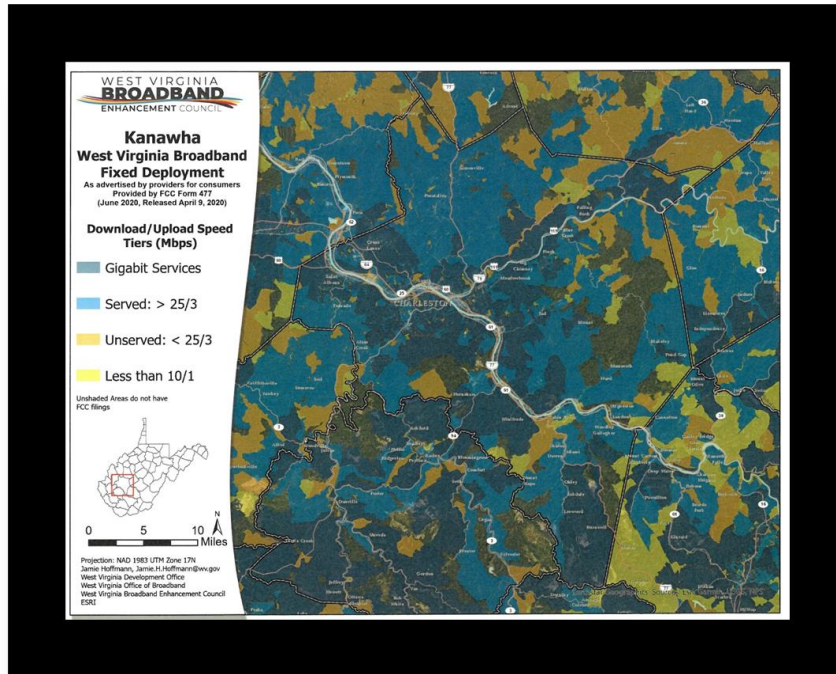
* Note - a BSL can be served by multiple providers and transmission technologies.

Technology	Provider	Total BSLs
Cable	Optimum	78,521
Licensed Fixed Wireless	T-Mobile US	64,734
Copper Wire	FRONTIER	17,186
Fiber	FRONTIER	15,703
Licensed Fixed Wireless	VERIZON	9,058
Fiber	SecureNet	4,763
Cable	Xfinity	112
Fiber	Optimum	22
Fiber	Alpha Technologies Inc.	19
Copper Wire	Citynet LLC	6
Fiber	Citynet LLC	4
Fiber	Segra	2
Licensed Fixed Wireless	King Street Wireless, L.P.	2
Fiber	NetFortris	1

Source: West Virginia Office of Broadband



Mapping of Broadband Fixed Development Download/Upload Speed and Unserved/Unfunded Areas in Kanawha County, provided by the West Virginia Broadband Enhancement Council.





Economy

Population has shrunk in the Kanawha Valley for nearly 30 years. In the 1960 census, Charleston had 86,000 in population and Kanawha County 253,000. Today, the capital city is slipping below 48,000 and the county below 175,000. The reason for Kanawha Valley's decreasing numbers is due to loss of jobs. Chemical plants automated, glass plants closed, and coal mining jobs saw a steady decline. However, there are successes in the county, South Charleston's Gestamp provides over 400 good paying jobs and the South Charleston Technology Park and Mid-Atlantic Technology Research, and Innovation Center have been successful. In addition, more new companies are starting to move to Kanawha County.

Major industries in Kanawha County include healthcare, government, chemicals and manufacturing; representing more employment opportunities than any county in the West Virginia.

There are fourteen (14) municipalities in Kanawha County: They are: Belle, Cedar Grove, Charleston, Chesapeake, Clendenin, Dunbar, East Bank, Glasgow, Handley, Marmet, Nitro, Pratt, St. Albans and South Charleston.



Kanawha County US Census Bureau Quick Facts	West Virginia	Kanawha County
Population estimates, July 1, 2023, (V2023)	1,770,071	174,805
Population estimates base, April 1, 2020, (V2023)	1,793,713	180,749
Population, percent change - April 1, 2020 (estimates base) to July 1, 2023, (V2023)	-1.30%	-3.30%
Population, Census, April 1, 2020	1,793,716	180,745
Population, Census, April 1, 2010	1,852,994	193,063
Persons under 18 years, percent	19.80%	19.60%
Persons 65 years and over, percent	21.20%	22.10%
Veterans, 2018-2022	114,894	10,091
Housing Units, July 1, 2023, (V2023)	863,745	90,341
Owner-occupied housing unit rate, 2018-2022	74.20%	69.70%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2018-2022	\$145,800	\$131,200
Median selected monthly owner costs -with a mortgage, 2018-2022	\$1,180	\$1,166
Median selected monthly owner costs -without a mortgage, 2018-2022	\$371	\$418
Median gross rent, 2018-2022	\$831	\$868
Households, 2018-2022	716,040	77,252
Persons per household, 2018-2022	2.43	2.29
Living in same house 1 year ago, percent of persons age 1 year+, 2018-2022	88.90%	90.40%
Households with a computer, percent, 2018-2022	88.80%	90.50%
Households with a broadband Internet subscription, percent, 2018-2022	82.70%	84.80%
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2018-2022	88.40%	90.60%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2018-2022	22.70%	28.20%
With a disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2018-2022	13.80%	14.00%
Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent	7.40%	6.80%
In civilian labor force, total, percent of population age 16 years+, 2018-2022	53.10%	54.80%
Total accommodation and food services sales, 2017 (\$1,000)	4,069,148	577,522
Total transportation and warehousing receipts/revenue, 2017 (\$1,000)	3,068,787	1,021,549
Total retail sales, 2017 (\$1,000)	23,057,778	3,151,412
Total retail sales per capita, 2017	\$12,678	\$17,172
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2018-2022	26.3	22
Median household income (in 2022 dollars), 2018-2022	\$55,217	\$55,226
Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2022 dollars), 2018-2022	\$31,462	\$34,976
Persons in poverty, percent	17.90%	17.70%
Total employer establishments, 2021	35,316	4,494
Total employment, 2021	519,122	71,343
Total annual payroll, 2021 (\$1,000)	24,261,040	3,654,408
Total employment, percent change, 2020-2021	-4.20%	-7.20%
Total nonemployer establishments, 2021	91,015	9,069
All employer firms, Reference year 2017	24,430	3,624
Population per square mile, 2020	74.6	200.5
Population per square mile, 2010	77.1	214.1



Top 10 Employers in Kanawha County

1. Vandalia Health
2. Kanawha County Board of Education
3. WVU Hospitals-WVU Medicine
4. West Virginia Department of Health & Human Services
5. West Virginia Department of Highways
6. Panther Creek Mining, LLC
7. City of Charleston
8. CareFirst Management Company, LLC
9. West Virginia Department of Administration
10. Express Services, Inc.

Source: Workforce WV, March 2023



PUTNAM COUNTY



Putnam County Courthouse



Putnam County lies within the Allegheny Plateau. The Kanawha River Valley bisects Putnam County from southeast to northwest and provides much of the flat land used for development in the area. Putnam County is located between West Virginia’s two largest cities – Charleston and Huntington. There are six (6) municipalities in Putnam County, they are listed as follows: Bancroft, Buffalo, Eleanor, Hurricane, Poca and Winfield. Also, a portion of Nitro is located in Putnam County.

Distance to Major Cities from Winfield

Atlanta.....	534 miles
Chicago.....	469 miles
Cincinnati.....	180 miles
Cleveland.....	275 miles
Columbus.....	200 miles
Lexington.....	170 miles
New York.....	570 miles
Pittsburgh.....	257 miles
Washington, DC.....	365 miles

TRANSPORTATION

Highways

Putnam County is served by Interstate 64, which provides service from St. Louis, Missouri to Richmond, Virginia by US Routes 35 and 60 & WV Routes 34 and 62.

Completed or Planned Highway Improvements:

- **US 35 between WV 869 and Mason Co 40:** This project paved the new 14.60-mile corridor along with the construction of an interchange at WV 869.

Funding Source: FHWA and WVDOT
 Cost: \$58 million

- **I-64 between Scott Depot Exit and Nitro Exit:** The project, currently in the construction phase, is a multi-year project that will widen I-64 from the US 35/I-64 Interchange to just east of the Nitro Interchange. The project aims to alleviate congestion at the former four lane bridge bottleneck, found in between two six lane portions of interstate.

Funding Source: FHWA and WVDOT
 Cost: \$245 million

- **Culloden Interchange:**

- New Entrance and Exit Ramp along Interstate 64 is currently under construction.

Funding Source: National Highway Performance Program (NHPP) and General Obligation bonds.
 Cost: \$37 million

Public Transportation



Public transportation services are provided by the Kanawha Valley Regional Transportation Authority (KRT) throughout a small portion of Putnam County through Nitro Marketplace. Taxi service is available through Teays Valley Taxi.

Rail Service

Freight service is provided by CSX and Norfolk-Southern. Amtrak service traverses Putnam County, but the nearest stations are in Huntington and Charleston.

Air Service

Air service in Putnam County is provided by West Virginia International Yeager Airport, located in Charleston.

UTILITIES

Water

Water is provided to Putnam County residents by West Virginia American Water, Putnam Public Service District and the City of Hurricane.

Electric

American Electric Power (AEP) provides electricity throughout Putnam County.

Gas and Other

Natural gas is provided by Mountaineer Gas.

Broadband

There are **25,831 Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs)** in Putnam County, and an **estimated population of 56,962**.

- **79% are Served (>100/20 Mbps): 20,407 BSLs**
 - Served* by Fiber: 9,636
 - Served* by Cable: 19,669
 - Served* by Copper: 0
 - Served* by Licensed Fixed Wireless: 1,499
- **3% are Underserved (<100/20 Mbps): 781 BSLs**
- **18% are Unserved (<25/3 Mbps): 4,643 BSLs**



List of Service Provider offerings:

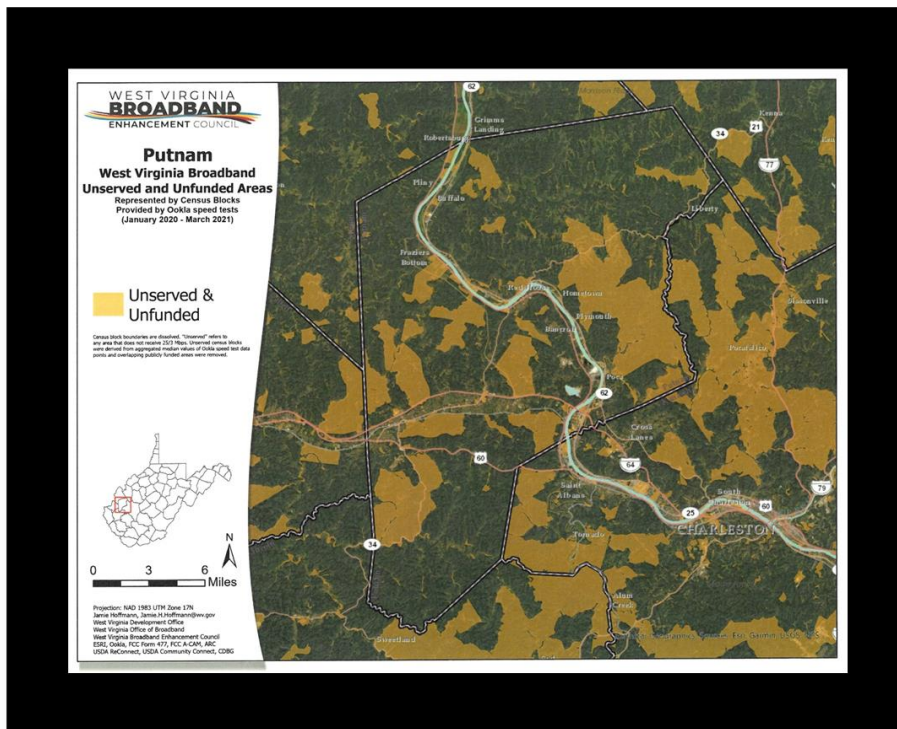
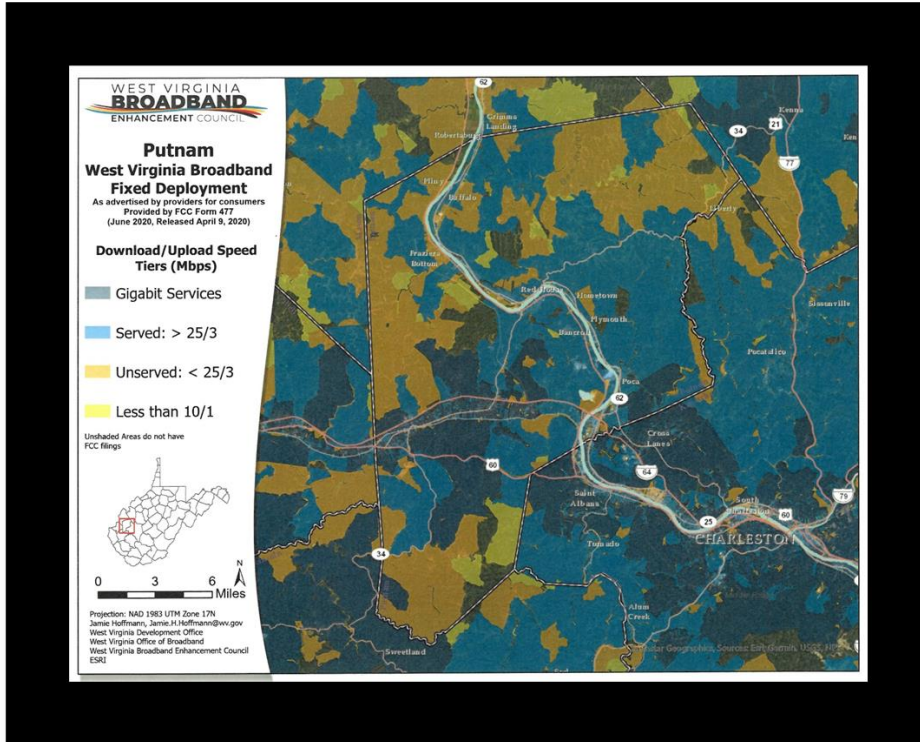
* Note - a BSL can be served by multiple providers and transmission technologies.

Technology	Provider	Total BSLs
Licensed Fixed Wireless	T-Mobile US	17,674
Cable	Optimum	12,042
Fiber	FRONTIER	9,633
Cable	Xfinity	8,038
Unlicensed Fixed Wireless	Arx Web	4,519
Copper Wire	FRONTIER	4,160
Licensed Fixed Wireless	VERIZON	2,746
Copper Wire	Armstrong Telephone Company - WV	250
Cable	ArmstrongUtilitiesInc	34
Fiber	Alpha Technologies Inc.	5
Fiber	Optimum	2
Fiber	Citynet LLC	2
Fiber	NetFortris	1
Copper Wire	Citynet LLC	1

Source: West Virginia Office of Broadband



Mapping of Broadband Fixed Development Download/Upload Speed and Unserved/Unfunded Areas in Putnam County, provided by the West Virginia Broadband Enhancement Council.





Economy

Putnam County is the fastest economically growing county in the region, with an economy that continues to flourish. In the past year, numerous businesses have expanded throughout the county including business at multiple industrial parks. New developments and residential subdivisions are also continuing to be built. Putnam County has the advantage of being located between Charleston and Huntington and connected by interstate highway to both cities. The county is endowed with a relatively large amount of flat developable land, both in the Teays Valley area and in the Kanawha River Valley. The widening of U.S. 35 from I-64 to Buffalo (including a new I-64 interchange) has boosted economic development potential. Teays Valley is mostly a mix of residential, retail and service development.



Putnam County US Census Bureau Quick Facts	West Virginia	Putnam County
Population estimates, July 1, 2023, (V2023)	1,770,071	56,962
Population estimates base, April 1, 2020, (V2023)	1,793,713	57,441
Population, percent change - April 1, 2020 (estimates base) to July 1, 2023, (V2023)	-1.30%	-0.80%
Population, Census, April 1, 2020	1,793,716	57,440
Population, Census, April 1, 2010	1,852,994	55,486
Persons under 18 years, percent	19.80%	21.30%
Persons 65 years and over, percent	21.20%	20.00%
Veterans, 2018-2022	114,894	3,682
Housing Units, July 1, 2023, (V2023)	863,745	25,056
Owner-occupied housing unit rate, 2018-2022	74.20%	82.10%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2018-2022	\$145,800	\$202,300
Median selected monthly owner costs -with a mortgage, 2018-2022	\$1,180	\$1,453
Median selected monthly owner costs -without a mortgage, 2018-2022	\$371	\$431
Median gross rent, 2018-2022	\$831	\$1,007
Households, 2018-2022	716,040	22,402
Persons per household, 2018-2022	2.43	2.55
Households with a computer, percent, 2018-2022	88.80%	91.70%
Households with a broadband Internet subscription, percent, 2018-2022	82.70%	84.30%
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2018-2022	88.40%	93.60%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2018-2022	22.70%	29.50%
With a disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2018-2022	13.80%	7.10%
Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent	7.40%	6.00%
In civilian labor force, total, percent of population age 16 years+, 2018-2022	53.10%	57.70%
Total accommodation and food services sales, 2017 (\$1,000)	4,069,148	97,893
Total health care and social assistance receipts/revenue, 2017 (\$1,000)	15,236,903	247,138
Total transportation and warehousing receipts/revenue, 2017 (\$1,000)	3,068,787	73,928
Total retail sales, 2017 (\$1,000)	23,057,778	752,407
Total retail sales per capita, 2017	\$12,678	\$13,269
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2018-2022	26.3	28.3
Median household income (in 2022 dollars), 2018-2022	\$55,217	\$75,725
Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2022 dollars), 2018-2022	\$31,462	\$38,589
Persons in poverty, percent	17.90%	10.40%
Total employer establishments, 2021	35,316	1,209
Total employment, 2021	519,122	16,998
Total annual payroll, 2021 (\$1,000)	24,261,040	900,426
Total employment, percent change, 2020-2021	-4.20%	-1.00%
Total nonemployer establishments, 2021	91,015	3,258
Veteran-owned employer firms, Reference year 2017	1,872	93
Population per square mile, 2020	74.6	166.2
Population per square mile, 2010	77.1	160.5



Top 10 Employers in Putnam County

1. Toyota Motor Manufacturing, WV, Inc.
2. Putnam County Board of Education
3. Vandalia Health
4. Appalachian Power Company
5. Walmart
6. Triton Construction, Inc.
7. Nitro Construction Services, Inc.
8. Putnam County Commission
9. Diamond Electric Manufacturing Corp.
10. GMB Powerline Services, LLC

Source: Workforce WV, March 2023



F. Regional Intergovernmental Council (RIC) Progress Report

Local Technical Assistance

The Council's staff was involved in various stages of projects, including.

- Provided grant administration to twenty or more local governments having HUD, EPA, USDA, US Army Corps of Engineer 571 and 340 programs and ARC grants, as well as State agency grants. This is an important service offered by RIC to keep local governments in compliance with federal regulations and audits.
- Disseminated information on State and Federal development programs to all local governments in the RIC region. Worked with local officials in developing projects.
- Served on various committees and boards, including the Putnam County Transportation Committee, Clay County Broadband Committee, CCR Regional Broadband Committee, the Madson-Boone Recreation Plan Committee, the Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation Economic Development Committee, the Kanawha Coal Reliant Communities Group, the Community Reinvestment Act Committee, the WV Association of Regional Planning and Development Councils, and the WV Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations.
- Assisted communities and others by providing GIS mapping and other technical services. Provided information regarding various government programs and advised communities in dealing with various technical and administrative issues.
- Assisted the Town of Smithers, the Town of Glasgow, Town of Clay and the Clay County Commission by providing technical assistance to develop outdoor recreation projects to be considered for Department of Interior Land and Water Conservation Grants.
- Provided census and other data to local governments, communities, and others.
- Assisted local water providers in development source-water assessment and protection plans.
- Assisted communities in Boone and Clay counties with initiating Broadband Cooperatives and applying for needed funding.

Community and Economic Development

- RIC administered over 30 of infrastructure projects, as well as Community and Economic Development, too many to list. Please review the above list of projects. The current count for administering is 59.
- RIC is assisting in the development of additional infrastructure projects, including Nitro Regional Wastewater Treatment Improvements; the Boone County/Madison Sewer Rehabilitation Project; the Kanawha PSD Sewer Extension Project, the Elk Valley PSD Sewer Extension Project, the Clay County PSD Big Otter Nebo Walker Road Waterline Extension, Town of Clay Water Tank Replacement, Town



of Clay Wastewater Improvements and Cedar Grove Sewer Project. RIC also assisted with funding requests for many other projects, some of which are pending.

- RIC prepared three (3) newsletters and one Annual Report.
- Attended the WV Association of Regional Planning and Development Councils Annual Conference.
- Assisted Central Appalachia Empowerment Zone in developing an application for a technology center broadband grant from ARC.
- Completed six HUD Community Development and Appalachian Regional Commission Applications.
- Participated in numerous trainings on the POWER+ Program and the Broadband Infrastructure Program through the WV Broadband Committee.

Private Development

- Completed and submitted annual CEDS Update.
- Provided information on Region III to consultants, market analysts and private businesses to promote economic development.
- Assisted the WV Tech Park with developing Build Back Better EDA application for a new area of development.
- Assisted the State with broadband development efforts, including reviewing applications for technical assistance grants and preparing a regional broadband strategic plan.
- Assisting the Putnam Public Service District to upgrade their force Main Lines and Pump Station to accommodate new development of a large commercial user.
- Assisting the Putnam Public Service District to upgrade their water treatment plant to provide all business and residences in their system. The District is operating on approximately 70% capacity.
- Assisting in the development of a waterline to the Rock Creek Development Park (formerly the Hobet Complex) in Boone County to foster business expansion and creation in the Boone County Region.
- Assisted the Civil Military Innovative Institute in developing a site for their Command Center for training service personnel in Clay County. This group will assist in job creation in this distressed county.



Transportation Planning

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

The current Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) was updated and developed for Kanawha and Putnam counties. The MTP was adopted by the RIC Policy Board in September 2021. This multimodal plan was updated to reflect existing and planned infrastructure and investments of the region's transportation network. The MTP identifies multimodal deficiencies and opportunities for the region's transportation network including highway, public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. The RIC MTP is updated on a four-year cycle. The *2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan* was adopted by the RIC Policy board on September 9, 2021. In 2024, RIC is launching its efforts to update the RIC MTP.

Transit Planning

RIC continues to assist the region's largest public transportation provider, the Kanawha Valley Regional Transportation Authority (KRT), and all organizations that provide paratransit services. RIC continues to conduct the intergovernmental review process for the Section 5310 grant program on an annual basis. RIC coordinates with KRT in the development process of transit performance and transit safety targets to increase safety and transit infrastructure conditions as part of Transportation Performance Management in the TIP and MTP.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

RIC transportation planning staff developed the FY 2024-2027 TIP in December of 2023. The RIC Transportation Team continues to maintain and improve the TIP database and provide information to the public in a variety of accessible formats using an array of data visualization techniques, including the equity view layer, that's maps current TIP projects and how it relates to equity data considerations from the latest American Community Survey Data.

Census Management Planning

RIC continued to maintain its census library of printed and digital data materials. RIC transportation planning staff responded to census requests from member municipalities, agencies, and the public as new data from the 2020 Census and American Community Survey. RIC transportation planning staff assisted with census mapping requests from member municipalities and the public.

Transportation Databases/Geographic Information (GIS)

RIC transportation planning staff continued to expand capabilities and increase mapping and data services utilizing Geographic Information System (GIS) technology in 2022 through the acquisition of additional GIS data, software, and training. Geography training continued in 2023 and 2024. RIC continues to utilize GIS-based software and technology in most of its transportation planning endeavors. GIS software and technology enables the RIC transportation planning staff to provide mapping and data analysis for transportation planning initiatives and RIC Community Development projects, in addition to other projects for regional agencies and stakeholders.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Initiatives

RIC transportation planning staff continued bicycle and pedestrian planning initiatives through the continuation of the RIC Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC). The committee meets on a



quarterly basis to further the development and implementation of non-motorized transportation improvements throughout Kanawha and Putnam counties. RIC continues its Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Technical Assistance Program to promote education and provide technical assistance for member municipalities in developing self-evaluations and ADA transition plans.

RIC Title VI Plan

The RIC Title VI Plan for transportation planning was first adopted by the RIC Policy Board in June 2016 and requires the RIC transportation planning program and activities must comply with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as well as subsequent acts and executive orders which fall under the umbrella of Title VI. In 2024, RIC transportation planning staff will develop an update to the Title VI Plan. The plan provides specific guidelines for RIC to comply with the requirements of Title VI. The goal of the plan is to ensure transportation planning activities which utilize federal funding do not discriminate against any person or group of people on the basis of race, religion, sex, national origin, ethnicity, age, disability, political affiliation, color, marital status, sexual orientation, economic status, or any other characteristic protected by federal law. The RIC Title VI Plan for transportation planning is reviewed annually by the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) during the years between plan updates. The current Title VI Plan was adopted by the RIC Policy Board in 2022.

RIC Public Participation Plan (PPP)

The RIC Public Participation Plan for transportation planning was updated and adopted by the RIC Policy Board in 2022. The plan details the strategies, techniques, and activities used to inform, engage, and involve the public through the metropolitan transportation planning process for the purpose of improving and maximizing public involvement. The plan also includes current and future strategies, techniques, and activities used to promote public participation through various planning initiatives and programs of the RIC. Additionally, the Public Participation Plan outlines goals and objectives to ensure meaningful and comprehensive public participation in metropolitan transportation planning activities.

A significant area of importance in the plan is the ongoing focus of addressing equity and ensure inclusiveness in public outreach efforts for underserved communities, minority populations, low-income populations, persons of limited English proficiency (LEP), low-literacy persons, and persons with disabilities. The RIC Public Participation Plan for transportation planning is reviewed annually by the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) during the years between plan updates. RIC will update its PPP in 2024.

RIC Congestion Management Plan

In 2016, RIC transportation planning staff began developing a Congestion Management Plan (CMP) and process for the RIC transportation planning area. The CMP is a requirement for MPOs that have planning jurisdiction within a Transportation Management Area (TMA). The plan identifies highway segments which regularly experience above average travel times. Actual vehicle travel time data for the region were used to identify these segments. Public input was also solicited for determining high-congestion areas. Short-term and long-term solutions were developed for the purpose of alleviating traffic congestion on identified high-congestion segments.



Originating as a suggestion from the CMP, the development of an initial System Performance Report for the RIC transportation planning area began in 2018 and was completed in 2019. The report reflects the integration of national performance goals from the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act—reaffirmed by the current federal transportation legislation, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The RIC System Performance Report is updated on an annual basis and is utilized in assessing the efficiency of the transportation network in the RIC transportation planning area of Kanawha and Putnam counties.

MPOs are required to coordinate with State DOTs and public transit providers to integrate performance-based transportation planning as set forth by the USDOT Transportation Performance Management (TPM) initiative.

The RIC System Performance Report details performance measures and performance targets adopted by the state of West Virginia, RIC, and KRT for the purposes of documenting performance and tracking progress, supporting data-driven processes for transportation investments and planning efforts.

RIC Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP)

In June 2023, the RIC Policy Board adopted the RIC CSAP. Simultaneously, the RIC Policy Board adopted a vision of zero traffic deaths and serious injuries in Kanawha and Putnam counties. This sets the stage for eligibility for the USDOT Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Discretionary Grant Program. In 2024, the RIC CSAP was pre-certified as an eligible SS4A CSAP compliant plan ensuring eligibility for projects in Kanawha and Putnam counties.

Currently, RIC is ramping up efforts to host an annual safety and resiliency task force – a combined task force that is aimed at a vision of zero fatalities and serious injuries, and minimizing property damage, due to emergency disasters and traffic collisions.

Hazard Mitigation Planning (HMP)

In 2022, RIC administered and facilitated the five-year update to the Region Hazard Mitigation Plan which encompasses all hazards impacting Boone, Clay, Kanawha and Putnam counties. Hazard Mitigation Plans analyze existing conditions, in terms of hazard type, historical data, and risk. An approved hazard mitigation plan is required to be adopted by participating municipalities and counties to be eligible to receive federal disaster public assistance. The update to the Region 3 Hazard Mitigation Plan is complete and was granted Approvable Pending Adoption (APA) status by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region 3 in 2022 and was fully adopted by Region 3 in early 2023.

Currently, RIC is ramping up efforts to host an annual safety and resiliency task force – a combined task force that is aimed at a vision of zero fatalities and serious injuries, and minimizing property damage, due to emergency disasters and traffic collisions. As flooding is a major risk factor for Region 3, RIC staff have completed training on Spatial Hydrology through West Virginia University in 2024. These skills will be used to develop multilayered regional terrain, hydrology, repetitive loss structure, and flood risk analyses through various data visualization techniques.



III. SWOT Analysis

SWOT Analysis for FY 2024-2028 CEDS

<p>Strengths</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intermittent Transportation Access 2. Abundant Workforce 3. Diversity of Industry and Business 4. Natural Resources 5. Education 6. WV Regional Technology Park 7. Growing Tourism Industry 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bank Loans and Grants for Businesses 2. Out of Country or State Investors 3. Re-employment of Idle Workforce 4. Shale Gas Industry 5. Health Care 6. Startup Businesses in Technology and Tourism 7. Attracting population 8. Local suppliers to Corporations
<p>Weaknesses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of Developable Building Sites 2. Low workforce participation 3. Lack of Infrastructure 4. Housing deficiencies 	<p>Threats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local Businesses Shutting Down 2. Workforce Readiness 3. Lack of Capital 4. Opioid Epidemic



Strengths

- 1. Intermittent Transportation Access.** Regional Access in the Kanawha-Putnam area is provided by three major Interstate facilities and three major US facilities: I-64, I-77, I-79, US 35, US 60, and US 119. These routes serve to connect the region to Huntington, Morgantown, Parkersburg, and Beckley in West Virginia; Dayton, Columbus, and Cleveland in Ohio; Lexington, Kentucky; Roanoke and Richmond, Virginia; and Winston-Salem in North Carolina.

Interstate 64 is an east-west Interstate freeway with current termini in Lake Wentzville, Missouri in the west and Chesapeake, Virginia in the east. There are 184 miles of Interstate 64 within the state of West Virginia. The facility connects Huntington, Charleston, Beckley, and Lewisburg within the state.

Interstate 77 is a north-south Interstate freeway with current termini in Columbia, South Carolina in the south and Cleveland, Ohio in the north. The facility is a toll road for 88 miles of its 186 miles within the state of West Virginia and shares its alignment with Interstate 64 between Beckley and Charleston. I-77 connects Beckley, Charleston, Princeton, Bluefield and Parkersburg within the state.

Interstate 79 is a north-south Interstate freeway with current termini in Charleston, West Virginia to the south and Erie, Pennsylvania to the north. Approximately 160 miles of this facility traverses West Virginia, and it connects Charleston to Clarksburg, Fairmont, and Morgantown within the state and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania outside of the state.

US 35 is a north-south US Highway connecting Charleston through the southern portion of Ohio to Michigan City, Indiana. US 35 connects to Interstate 75 and Interstate 70 in the Dayton, Ohio area. The route has been relocated in Putnam and Mason Counties to a new four-lane facility.

US 60 is a major east-west US highway, stretching over 2,600 miles between Quartzsite, Arizona and Virginia Beach, Virginia. Within the state of West Virginia, the route connects Huntington, Charleston and Lewisburg.

US 119 connects Pikeville, Kentucky to Sandy Township, Pennsylvania. The facility is known primarily as Corridor G and serves as a major connection between the residential and commercial areas south of Charleston and the downtown. Appalachian Corridor G begins in Williamson, on the Kentucky State line and ends at MacCorkle Avenue. (Source: RIC's 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan)

A navigable river, the Kanawha, supports economic development in Region III. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers maintains navigation channel 300 feet wide and nine feet



deep in the Kanawha River, which flows through Putnam and Kanawha Counties in Region III. Waterborne commerce has tripled on the Kanawha River in the last thirty years. The cargoes transported on the Kanawha include coke and coal, salt brine, sand and gravel, oil and gas, iron and steel and miscellaneous products. The Marmet Locks and Dam now has twin 56'x360' lock chambers which expedites transporting cargo. The Winfield Locks in Putnam County is able to accommodate nine huge barges at a time.

Rail service is available for commercial and industrial usage. The rail lines link Region III to all United States market areas. Norfolk Southern and CSX Systems handle the major freight needs of coal, chemical and other industries.

Yeager Airport in Charleston provides air service in the Region. Yeager provides non-stop flights to eight different cities: Charlotte, Houston, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Chicago, Washington DC, Myrtle Beach and Ft. Lauderdale.

- 2. Abundant Workforce.** A strong work ethic is one of the major factors that attracted companies more than seventy years ago and continues to be an important consideration for new businesses. The Region offers trained production supervisors; chemists; chemical technicians; plant and equipment operators; molding, forming and extrusion machine operators; machinists and industrial mechanics.

Region III, as well as the entire state of West Virginia, is developing a national reputation for its training programs and workers who are committed to getting the job done. West Virginia is below the national average for employee turnover rates across all industries and has the nation's lowest rate for turnover in manufacturing industries. Employee turnover among all industries in West Virginia is 8.9 percent compared to a national average of 9.4 percent. National benchmark studies show that our region's workforce is among the most productive in the nation, and training programs are structured so that they help business owners get in the best possible position to be successful. Welders, electricians and machinists, once called blue-collar workers, are now at the top of their fields, and are paid very well. Among them, is the Governor's Guaranteed Work Force Program (GGWFP) that provides new and expanding businesses with technical and financial assistance to train, retrain or upgrade the skills of their employees. The program emphasizes employee training designed to accommodate the needs of individual employers. The GGWFP works closely with education and industry to provide the most advanced knowledge possible. In fiscal year 2017, the GGWFP enabled 2,285 workers to receive training and provided over \$1,120,000 to improve the quality of our workforce. Since the program's launch, more than \$54 million has been awarded to employers and nearly 200,000 employees have received training.

Companies such as Toyota in Buffalo (Putnam County) have partnered with BridgeValley Community and Technical College to begin a program called "Advanced Manufacturing Technician" or AMT. This education-to-work program will give students



hands-on experience in manufacturing while they earn a two-year degree. Other community and technical colleges are developing programs for students to train for jobs that are in demand and to help connect companies with students to do those jobs. These programs also extend into West Virginia's high schools.

3. Diversity of Industry and Businesses. The number of industries and businesses reflect the diversity of the Region.

The motor vehicle parts and equipment cluster is one of the fastest growing sectors of the West Virginia economy. Businesses that supply and support the automotive industry find a ready workforce with the necessary skills for today's market. West Virginia's workforce has earned a reputation for high productivity with a low turnover rate in manufacturing industries. NGK Spark Plugs, located in Sissonville, came to West Virginia in 1995 as one of the first Japanese automotive component manufactures. The Sissonville plant began producing oxygen sensors, then adding spark plugs to its production line in 2008. Toyota Motor Manufacturing West Virginia broke ground in Buffalo in 1996 and has expanded nine times. To date the Toyota Buffalo plant represents a \$1.4 billion total investment and directly employs roughly 1,600 people. The auto ignition coil manufacturer Diamond Electric began operations in Eleanor in 1997. Gestamp West Virginia opened a modern stamping facility in South Charleston in 2012. Nippon thermostat also announced a multi-million-dollar expansion in 2012. Between 2006 and 2016 the number of automotive industry jobs in West Virginia increased by 47.6 percent. Industry experts expect the economies of emerging markets will continue to drive up growth in auto parts manufacturing during the next several years.

The Chemical Alliance Zone (CAZ) was created in 1999 to channel and leverage efforts to strengthen our local chemical industry. A nonprofit collaborative of citizens, labor leaders, educators, government officials, chemical executives and business leaders, the CAZ is dedicated to maintaining and expanding the business of chemistry throughout West Virginia. Using a synergistic approach, the CAZ promotes the region to chemical companies, businesses that use their products and entities that produce related consumer-end goods. Companies seeking a new site to expand, relocate or build new facilities will discover that CAZ offers a promising future based on a long history of success.

A variety of research and development-oriented firms are locating at the WV Regional Technology Park to capitalize on the research environment. Their presence and capabilities can support research and development and product introduction plans. Long-term arrangements include sale or lease of property, shared investments and joint ventures for new products.

The region, particularly the Kanawha Valley has diversified its economy in recent decades. Although still an important chemical manufacturing location, the Charleston area serves as a regional center for health care and professional services. The



existence of two universities and a community college, as well as the seat of state government, provides additional economic stability.

4. **Natural Resources.** The region is rich in natural resources, such as coal, natural gas, oil and timber. Coal and natural gas are available as commodities as well as for use in the chemical, other manufacturing and electrical generation industries. The Kanawha River supplies cheap, reliable transportation, primarily for coal. Historically, salt was an important resource and gave rise to the region’s chemical industry. The abundance of sand resulted in a thriving glass industry for a time.

Other natural resources, such as forests, scenic beauty and fishable streams, are important “quality of life” factors. These make the region a more desirable place to live, indirectly supporting economic development.

5. **Education.** The region has five fully accredited colleges and universities offering quality undergraduate and graduate degree programs. Charleston hosts a branch campus of West Virginia University that serves as a clinical campus for the university’s medical and dental schools. Students at either school must complete their class work at the university’s main campus in Morgantown, however, they can complete their clinical rotations at hospitals in Charleston. Charleston is also home to a 2,425-student private college, the University of Charleston. Located within the immediate area are: West Virginia State University in Institute; BridgeValley Community and Technical College with campuses in South Charleston and Montgomery, and Marshall University’s South Charleston campus. The region is also home to the Charleston branch of the Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing, an independent program administered by Marshall University. The West Virginia Junior College (WVJC) was established in Charleston, in 1892. In the ensuing 125 years, WVJC has established campuses in Morgantown and Bridgeport, WV. In 2013 WVJC Online was established, creating access to WVJC’s quality, affordable educational programs. Programs are: Business Administration, Nursing, Clinical Medical Assistant, Information Technology, and Medical Office Administration. Carver Career Center – Advanced Career Education (ACE) offers credentials, certifications, and licenses in growing industries across the state. Ben Franklin Career Center offers both high school and adult opportunities for learning, training and furthering education that enrich their lives and also promotes the economic growth of our region and state. The school offers 20 high school programs and 6 adult (post secondary) programs: Certified Welder, Commercial Driving, Electrical Technician, HVAC Technician, Phlebotomy Technician, and Practical Nursing.

Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College and the Boone Career and Technical Center, located just off Corridor G (US 119) near Danville, combines a community college and technical school on the same campus. Also, the Boone County Adult Learning Center, located in Madison, offers programs to provide Adult Learners



with the skills necessary to be successful in post-secondary, vocational and the workforce.

In Putnam County, at Marshall University’s Teays Valley branch, students can take a variety of undergraduate and graduate classes. Strayer University also has a Teays Valley campus that is located off Exit 39 on I-64. Putnam Career and Technical Center, located in Eleanor, offers six secondary only programs (including two high school equivalency programs), sixteen secondary/post-secondary programs and three post-secondary only programs enrolling full-time and part-time students.

Individuals living in or around Clay County also have access to the Valley Fork Education Center, only five minutes off of Interstate 79, where programs are offered for the fastest growing careers in West Virginia – healthcare, energy and business technology. The facility, once the home of the Valley Fork Elementary School, and operated through the Kanawha Valley Community and Technology College, opened for college students in the fall of 2008.

6. **WV Regional Technology Park.** The West Virginia Regional Technology Park (Tech Park) in South Charleston is the newest research, education and technology campus in West Virginia’s higher education system.

The facility has a history of research and technological contributions, having been established by the Dow Chemical predecessor, Union Carbide Corporation, as the company’s primary research center in 1949. Now operated by the West Virginia’s Higher Education Policy Commission, the Tech Park adds significant capacity to the state’s academic, research and economic development missions. The diversified research, development and commercialization park focuses on chemicals, energy and related technologies for the advancement of education and economic development in the region, as well as West Virginia. Plans for the Tech Park are aimed at transforming investments in higher education and research into business and economic growth.

7. **Growing Tourism Industry.** The tourism industry has been experiencing growth in Region 3 over the past few years. As tourism increases in the region it can become a major driver of economic growth for many municipalities, contributing significantly to job creation and infrastructure development. Tourism stimulates growth in sectors like hospitality, transportation, entertainment, and retail. Technology has revolutionized the way people travel, from online booking platforms to mobile apps providing real-time information and virtual tours. This has made travel more accessible and convenient for tourists, fueling industry growth. Emerging destinations, like the destinations offered in the Region 3 area are gaining popularity as travelers seek unique experiences and off-the-beaten-path adventures. This diversification contributes to the overall growth of the travel industry.



WEAKNESSES

- 1. Lack of Developable/Affordable Building Sites.** The topography and lack of utilities limit availability of developable land in our region. Our state's mountains provide a beautiful backdrop for some of the most beautiful scenery in the world, but it is an obstacle. West Virginia's geography, especially in our region, can be characterized commonly as a valley between 100 yards and a half mile with a road, a river and a railroad running along it. Most of this valley is in the flood plain. On either side of this valley are mountain ridges with steep slopes of more than 60 degrees – in other words, flat, easily developable land that isn't subject to frequent flooding is in very short supply.

Much of the new construction occurs on hills to avoid flood hazards. Doing site preparation work for such sites is significantly higher in cost due to the need of moving a lot of earth. Building a four-lane highway requires frequent road cuts (cutting a path through the mountain, etc.). Whether building a school, factory or shopping center, it first requires moving earth to create a footprint for the facility. This added cost places a large burden on communities that want to build and diversify their economies by developing sites and infrastructure. Many are left without access to outside investment and must look for either local sources of funding or for some form of government assistance such as bonds or tax incentives.

- 2. Low Workforce Participation.** West Virginia has the lowest labor force participation rate in the country. In June 2023 only 3.3% of West Virginians were unemployed and actively looking for work. "Unemployment is not the problem," said John Deskins, the director of West Virginia University's Bureau of Business and Economic Research. "Our problem is we have a relatively small percentage of the adult population that is engaged in the labor force in the first place."

The labor force participation rate tracks the percentage of working age people who are either actively working or seeking employment. It's currently 54.6%, the lowest in the nation and well below the national participation rate of 62.6%. and it has been in that last place position or extremely close to it for about five decades. To come closer to the national rate, the state would need to increase its workforce by roughly 100,000 people.

Understanding why behind the low rate is more difficult. A number of factors could contribute to West Virginia's persistent labor force problem, including population decline, aging population, limited opportunities for economic mobility and the opioid epidemic. There are also lower numbers of college graduates and the continued decline of once-prominent state industries to consider. It all combines to create a situation where the state struggles.



- 3. Lack of infrastructure.** Infrastructure continues to be problematic for our region and state. There are more structurally deficient and functionally obsolete bridges than on the national average. Our climate and harsh winters are key contributors to the decay, but also the lack of proper maintenance, repair and replacement contribute as well. The main obstacle has been funding. Investment in infrastructure has steadily declined in West Virginia in terms of capital expenditures for new construction of roads and bridges. The road bond referendum that approved the sale of up to 1.6 billion in state bonds on October 7, 2017 is hoped to play a big part in improving the infrastructure in West Virginia. The bonds will be used to repair and replace obsolete bridges and roads and is hoped to help rebuild the infrastructure and the economy in West Virginia. Having a healthy and functioning infrastructure helps to drive the economy and improves the quality of life. A working infrastructure is key to economic success.

In today's world, access to high-speed Internet or broadband is crucial. More and more commerce is taking place on-line, and access to broadband can level the playing field between rural and non-rural communities when it comes to economic development. Unfortunately, some of our region and West Virginia lags behind the nation when it comes to accessibility to this important utility. Rural communities need access to affordable and accessible universal high-speed Internet just as they do to other infrastructure such as roads, bridges and telephone service. Increased broadband could create hundreds of jobs for our region. The Regional Intergovernmental Council assisted Clay County in preparing a HUD Community Development broadband grant for Clay, Calhoun and Roane Counties to develop an independent broadband service for the region. The Regional Broadband Development Committee was formed from the individual county broadband groups. This committee consists of three members from each county. They are working tirelessly to bring high speed internet services to their areas.

- 4. Housing Deficiencies:** The causes of shortage of affordable housing: land use and zoning policies that exclude affordable housing and create racial, economic, and Housing segregation; high costs of living, inadequate wages, and wealth and income inequality; a safety net that does not provide sufficient housing or supportive services. Six Innovative Affordable Housing Solutions: Expanding community land trusts, exploring new methods for constructing and producing homes, increasing access to home financing, advancing cross-sector housing solutions, transforming underutilized Spaces into affordable homes, and preserving lower-cost housing.



OPPORTUNITIES

1. **Bank Loans and Grant Opportunities for Business.** Finding grants or the right loan for a business can be difficult. Grants and banks have many requirements, rules and paperwork that can be overwhelming and frustrating. Securing funding for start-up firms based in research and innovation can be challenging because banks normally do not lend money for intangible assets. Some government and private agencies offer grant and loan funds to help small business startups or to grow existing businesses and provide a cheaper alternative to credit card rates.

2. **Out of Country or State Investors.** The region's beauty, friendly communities and low cost of living makes the area and state an appealing place to reside and work. Its strategic location and a readily available skilled workforce are vital incentives for investors to locate here.

The region has seen some success in attracting foreign companies such as Toyota, Kureha, Gestamp and NGK sparkplugs. The WV Development Office, political leaders and development organizations have been and continue to be aggressive in pursuing these investments.

3. **Re-employment of Idle Workforce.** With the downturn of the coal industry, many laid off workers are finding employment. With various start-up business like the Green Mining Model Business Program and different employment training programs many employees who have lost their jobs may see opportunity on the horizon. It is important that businesses, development officials and workforce investment boards work together with community and technical colleges to assure that laid-off workers are trained for the new positions.

4. **Shale Gas Industry.** The development of Marcellus Shale has the potential for significant economic development for our region and state. With the development of new methods for the exploration and development of unconventional reservoirs such as those found in the Marcellus Shale formation, West Virginia has seen significant increases in exploration permits since 2005. In many cases, the natural gas deposits also contain other useful by-products, including ethane. Ethane molecules can be "cracked" to create ethylene and ultimately many other chemicals. It is hoped that one or more "cracker" plants will be built in the state and that the chemical industry, particularly in the Kanawha Valley, will be revitalized.

5. **Health Care.** The healthcare industry is projected to continue to drive the nation's employment growth through 2026 by adding around 4 million new jobs, accounting for about a third of total job growth, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics data released in 2017. The healthcare industry has long fueled the country's economy. Demand is expected to pick up as the population ages, people live longer, more gain insurance coverage and chronic conditions become more prevalent.



The Kanawha Valley is a regional health care center and is positioned to take advantage of employment gains in this sector.

- 6. Startup Businesses in Technology and Tourism.** The technology industry is expanding with companies like Resolver, N3 and Infor locating in the Kanawha Valley and building a strong foundation for further technology growth and opportunity in the region. Resolver, a Canadian-based technology company that specializes in business solution and risk management software products located in Charleston in 2017. N3, an international sales and marketing firm based out of Atlanta located at the West Virginia Regional Technology Park in South Charleston in 2018. And in early 2019, Infor, a global technology company that runs cloud applications for local, state and federal government agencies and government contractors supporting these agencies opened a new office at Laidley Tower in Charleston. Infor is also partnering with Marshall University and West Virginia State University to build a pipeline of skilled talent that is trained in software engineering, cloud operations and support services related to Infor products.

The Mountain state is home to spirited small towns, undiscovered hidden gems and world class outdoor adventures. Kanawha County: State Capitol Building, Clay Center, Parks, Rivers, Wine Park, Outdoor recreation. Putnam County: Trails, Parks, Dining, Bear Wood Fairy Door Trail, Gritts Farm, Hurricane Bridge Park. Boone County: Coal Heritage Museum, Drawdy Falls Roadside Park, Hatfield and McCoy Trail. Clay County: Rail Bikes, Golden Delicious Apple Festival, Elk River Trail State Park.

- 7. Attracting Population.** West Virginia has created incentive programs with relocation assistance for remote workers. Ascend WV offers \$20,000 worth of incentives to people relocating to the State. This includes \$12,000 in cash, a year of free recreational activities and outdoor gear rental, a free co-working space, and social programming to help newcomers connect to their new community.
- 8. Local Supplies to Corporations.** Local sourcing helps to reduce supply chain risks as supply chains are often shorter when choosing to source locally. Lead times are often shorter, meaning any urgent requests can be dealt with in a timely manner. It also helps to reduce environmental impact by the reduction in emissions. Localizing your supply chain represents a tremendous opportunity to help the environment. When you reduce shipping and storage, it also reduces emissions and energy usage. Sourcing locally not only contributes to green manufacturing, but ultimately helps build consumer confidence. Supporting local businesses leads to strong local economies.



Threats

- 1. Local Businesses Shutting Down.** Business owners make difficult decisions all the time. Some businesses in our region have closed their doors because of economic conditions; low national economic growth has affected many businesses operations. The inability to generate the sufficient business profits is also a common reason for various companies in our area to close their doors. The owners spend money on inventory, production overhead and general business expenses when operating a company. Companies need economic resources to produce consumer goods and services. It is important that businesses take advantage of resources, such as the WV Small Business Development Center (WV SBDC), which may be able to provide the assistance they need to stay in business.
- 2. Workforce Readiness.** Business leaders continue to report struggles with hiring prepared and skilled employees. At a time when the baby boom generation is approaching retirement, businesses require an exceptional pipeline of new workers to continue the American traditions of innovation and productivity. Reports from different potential employers and local development authorities identify the inability to pass a drug test as a major issue.

Challenging transportation logistics are a hurdle for many residents in the region. Inadequate public transit and car affordability are significant barriers to attaining and maintaining workforce employment. The needs of employers are rapidly changing, and training providers must be more responsive, or the state economy will suffer.

- 3. Lack of Capital.** A small business that lacks sufficient working capital may find difficulty in attracting investors and lenders. Working capital shows investors and creditors that a company possesses the ability to pay back its loan or can earn sufficient profit that will allow investors to earn a return on their investments. The inability to attract investors and lenders affect company's ability to purchase necessary resources.

Capital has been very difficult for some businesses to acquire in the state because banks usually do not lend to start-ups, therefore, businesses struggle to find partners to provide that capital.

- 4. Opioid Epidemic.** According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, West Virginia has one of the highest rates in the United States of non-medical use of prescription pain relievers among 19 to 25-year olds and the highest age-adjusted rate of drug overdose deaths involving opioids. In 2017, there were 833 drug overdose deaths involving opioids in West Virginia-a rate of 49.6 deaths per 100,000 persons. This is threefold higher than the national rate of 14.6 deaths per 100,000 persons.

The opioid epidemic has hit Boone County especially hard. According to a 2018 report by the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) the epidemic is costing the Boone County



economy an estimated \$206.5 million a year, which is the highest per-capita burden of any county in America. Also, according to the same AEI report, Kanawha County's economy takes on a \$854 million burden each year on a total cost basis (not per-capita) from the opioid epidemic.

The opioid epidemic has crossed all socioeconomic and geographic boundaries and continues to affect the economy in our region costing employers substantial economic hardship and loss of productivity. It is often hard for companies to even find and retain qualified employees because of substance abuse issues.



IV. Strategic Direction / Action Plan



**A. FY 2024 - 2028 CEDS
Goals, Objectives, and Development**

Goal	
To achieve a diversified, balanced economy for the Region.	
Objective	Strategy
Economic Development Objectives and Strategies	
Maintain a strong industrial base with construction of new developable sites and expansion of existing industrial parks.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Partner with local agencies in developing adequate sites. 2. Assist in identifying potential developable sites in the region. 3. Promote continued development and expansion of the WV Regional Technology Park. 4. Develop water, sewer, transportation, and broadband infrastructure in preferred development areas.
Monitor market conditions and track data to be aware of and prepared for changing trends.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Disseminate information on market conditions and federal assistance programs to local governments and business associations. 2. Utilize data and information to assist government and communities to react quickly to rapidly changing conditions.
Promote entrepreneurship, innovation, and small business growth in the region.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assist small business incubators and local non-profit economic development programs to expand local businesses. 2. Support programs that provide training and business development assistance. 3. Support programs that provide access to capital for small, women/minority-owned, HUBZone, and rural businesses. 4. Assist with recognition for innovation and growth. Support certifications to develop suppliers and assist with supply-chain challenges.
Support the expansion of tourism and convention business.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with state and local trail and tourism groups to promote attractions of Region III. 2. Support programs that encourage tourism-related start-ups and expansions. 3. Work with CVBs to track tourism-related data and stats to share with governments, agencies, and economic development organizations. 4. Support travel-related projects being planned for the region. 5. Promote fairs, festivals, and other events within the region. 6. Establish, cultivate and grow new local attractions into a tourism destination. 7. Promote river adventures on the Kanawha, Elk, and Coal Rivers.
Support the region’s infrastructure development.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support and coordinate water, sewer, transportation, and broadband infrastructure in the four-county region.
Support local downtown revitalization plans and community services for economic growth.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide technical assistance to municipalities wishing to upgrade their structures and services. 2. Support the development of services and facilities necessary for



	<p>long-term growth.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Assist communities in applying for USDOT Transportation grants for downtown streetscape projects. 4. Monitor increasing office vacancies caused by remote worker expansion. 5. Engage in dialogue on ongoing homelessness issue.
Identify grants and other revenue streams as related to RIC’s overall purpose, particularly those related to community and economic development.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek grants of various sources and contents to assist in attaining identified goals and objectives. 2. Seek outside partners who may have the same or varied interests.
Support the region’s energy and chemical industries, automotive and emerging industries.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote clean coal technology. 2. Support construction of an ethane “cracker” in the region. 3. Support the Hydrogen HUB. 4. Provide end use economic opportunities for mountain top removal lands. 5. Promote the use of natural gas and electric as a motor vehicle fuel alternatives to focus on reduction of greenhouse gas and carbon emissions. 6. Promote Solar and Wind Energy
International Economic Development Objectives and Strategies	
Promote international trade development by increasing awareness of trade resources and information available at the local, state, and federal level to help WV companies take advantage of the overseas demand for U.S. products and services.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide startup support and consultative services in the areas of business and marketing plans, management, international finance, global market entry and growth strategies, research and analysis, product design and development plans. 2. Support technical assistance projects that provide knowledge of customers, products, and competitors to better capture and maintain global market share. 3. Fund incubators to commercialize regional development, patents, and inventions into innovative products.
Promote business attraction through Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support existing manufacturers through supply chain development by connecting manufacturers with OEMs. 2. Partner with U.S. Commercial Service and WV Office of Economic Development to provide technical assistance to local governments and economic development organizations.
Workforce Development Objectives and Strategies	
Assist communities to attract major employers and/or training institutes and career colleges where regions have experienced the long-term impact of the downturn in coal/energy, are experiencing sudden and severe closures of major employers, and/or are experiencing the closure of community schools leading to the occurrence or planned occurrence of the loss of the highest salaried jobs in the area.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To assist in the attraction of new, diverse companies, and/or the reuse of higher educational facilities for new training programs to better attract new employers, to provide training to at-risk students/trainees, more relevant apprenticeships, or OJTs training programs for those newly attracted companies. 2. Identify facility uses and likely occupants. 3. Work with economic development agencies, workforce investment boards, vocational schools, and community colleges to develop and advertise training programs for area residents. 4. Support manpower training programs for a skilled labor force. 5. Provide technology-based opportunities in software and network



	<p>security.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Develop workforce training programs for 21st Century requirements. 7. Building a resilient workforce that can better shift between jobs or industries when their core employment is threatened through job-driven skills strategies and support organizations. 8. Address the lack of middle housing, transportation & childcare when addressing workforce.
<p>Recommend, wherever feasible, the hiring of apprentices to assist in the building of a labor ready workforce and providing accessible services to those with disabilities including those with barriers to employment.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To provide goals to hire apprentices and develop a training regimen to increase their ability to become a journeyed craftsman. 2. Work with labor unions and WV Rehabilitation Services. 3. To set goals that provide employment to qualified persons that might have disabilities.
<p>Promote new and diversified technological training to assist emerging markets and processes in the region.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide technology-based opportunities in software and network security. 2. Develop workforce training programs for 21st Century requirements.
<p>Support increasing labor force participation by re-engaging the disengaged and disenfranchised.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work to provide training and access to employment opportunities for those not currently participating in the labor force.
<p>Safety and Resilience Objectives and Strategies</p>	
<p>Assist communities and regions which have suffered losses in coal mining and related manufacturing and power plant employment.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide assistance to development, economic diversity, and community impact in affected communities. 2. Workforce development and economic resilience in coal-dependent communities.
<p>Identify Hazard Mitigation procedures and goals as they relate to economic development.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review procedures and plans that might benefit business expansion or retention. 2. Work with communities and businesses to develop cooperation on mitigation planning.
<p>Assist major employers, colleges, and universities thru difficult economic and tenuous times.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To assist business and government in time of natural disaster by developing processes and procedures that relate to their concerns.
<p>Build economic resilience in times of major business and social disruptions.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When core employment is threatened by job skill change and disruptions, assist with identifying pertinent job driven skills, strategies and support systems which can work to build a resilient workforce making it easier to better shift between jobs and industries. 2. Employing safe development practices in business districts and surrounding communities. 3. Adapting business retention and expansion programs (e.g., economic gardening or other enterprise supports) to assist firms with economic recovery post-disruption.



B. Regional and County Priority Project Listing

Description of Programs, Project Selection and the Prioritization Process

The project package, a central listing of economic development projects, is a culmination of outreach efforts throughout the year. RIC has determined all projects to be classified as short-term, but in many cases, with long-term economic impact.

The process to assure the package includes all projects is as follows:

- Review of the previous year's project package
- Correspondence to all RIC members specifically requesting information regarding projects in their communities.
- Outreach to local economic development organizations
- CEDS committee input and meeting.

*** Project Listing begins on the following page**

FY 2024 - 2028 CEDS Regional and County Project List

Water Projects

ID NO.	Project Name	County	Sponsor	Project Cost
1	Harrison Widen Waterline Extension	Clay	Clay County PSD	\$7,000,000
	To provide water service to approximately 100 residences from Triplett Ridge to Nicholas County.			
2	Clay County PSD Big Otter Nebo Waterline	Clay	Clay County PSD	\$5,300,000
	To provide potable water to the 100 households near Interstate 79. This project has been developed for over 20 years with the inability of the Town of Clay to supply the necessary capacity of water to the residents. The Town of Clay completed their new plant in 2013 which doubled their volume and storage. The treatment plant can only be successful if additional customers are added in the near future.			
3	Moorefield (Ossie Road) Waterline Extension	Clay	Clay County PSD	\$1,500,000
	This is an additional waterline extension in the northern part of Clay County that will be served by the new Town of Clay treatment facility and the expanded storage and pressure of the Clay County interconnection project.			
4	Clay Roane PSD Elkhurst Waterline Extension	Clay	Clay Roane PSD	\$4,000,000
	To provide potable water along the Elk River from the current Clay Roane plant to the new Hartland Bridge (Route 16) This project serves many residences and camps on both sides of the Elk River and opens valuable land development for economic development.			
5 New	Relation Road Water Project	Kanawha	Kanawha County RDA	\$710,000
	To provide water to the relation road project area			
6	Town of Clay Water Tank Replacement	Clay	Town of Clay	\$975,000
	To replace two tanks, one of which was built in the late 1960's and is failing.			
7	Leatherwood Waterline Extension	Kanawha	Kanawha County Commission	\$2,547,000
	To provide potable water to the residences of Leatherwood Road near Clendenin by a public-private partnership with West Virginia American Water Company.			



8	Olcott Waterline Extension	Kanawha	Kanawha County Commission	\$7,000,000
	To provide potable water to the Olcott area to provide water service to approximately 175 residences.			
9	Mahon/Paint Creek Waterline Extension	Kanawha	Kanawha County Commission	\$4,100,000
	To provide potable water to the Mahon/Paint Creek area where pre-1977 mining has affected the quality and quantity of wells in the area. This project is being reviewed by the WV DEP AML for funding. This project will also serve the rest stop on the WV Turnpike.			
10	Fisher Ridge Waterline Extension	Putnam	Putnam County Commission	\$2,000,000
	To provide potable water service to the 28 residents of Fisher Ridge Putnam County.			
11	Phase II Jim Bee Ridge Waterline Extension	Putnam	Putnam County Commission	\$2,300,000
	To provide potable water service to the residents of the Phase II area of Jim Bee Ridge to the Jackson County line in Putnam County.			
12 New	Water Extension throughout Frazier's Bottom	Putnam	Putnam PSD	Unknown
	To extend water throughout Frazier's Bottom.			
13 New	Appalachian Outlaw Trail at Quincy Water & Sewer	Kanawha	Appalachian Outlaw Trail Organization	\$4,500,00
	Appalachian Outlaw Trail at Quincy Water & Sewer, Upper Kanawha Trails Plan			
SEWER PROJECTS				
14	WWTP Upgrade and Line Rehabilitation	Boone	Boone County PSD	\$4,300,000
	To upgrade the wastewater treatment plant in Danville and rehabilitate the lines in West Madison for increased inflow and infiltration.			
15 New	Town of East Bank Sewer	Kanawha	Town of East Bank	\$13,500,000
	To rehab the town's sewer system			



16	Foster Phase 1 Sanitary Sewer Extension	Boone	Boone County PSD	\$5,000,000
	To provide sanitary sewer to Route 3, Rock Creek, for the 68 residents to the Southern Community and Technical Collage.			
17	Foster Phase 2 Sanitary Sewer Extension	Boone	Boone County PSD	\$5,500,000
	To provide sanitary sewer to Route 3, Rock Creek, from Southern Community and Technical College to the mouth of Foster Hollow serving approximately 75 customers.			
18	Foster Phase 3 Sanitary Sewer Extension	Boone	Boone County PSD	\$6,500,000
	To provide sanitary sewer to Route 3, Rock Creek, from the mouth of Foster Hollow along the route serving approximately 100 customers.			
19	Eden's Fork Sewer Line Extension	Kanawha	Kanawha County Commission	\$875,000
	To construct a line extension that serves between 10 and 20 residences with sewer service to be connected to the Charleston Sanitary Board collection system.			
20	Greater St. Albans Phase III Sewer Extension	Kanawha	Greater St. Albans PSD	\$16,000,000
	To construct the sewer line extension that connects Brown's Creek, Vorpe Road and areas toward Tornado which would connect to the main GSAPSD line and be treated by the City of St. Albans WWTP.			
21	Sissonville PSD Various Sewer Line Extension	Kanawha	Sissonville PSD	\$8,178,006
	To provide sewer line extensions and upgrades throughout the system to be treated at the SPSD WWTP.			
22	Greater St. Albans Phase IV Sewer Extension	Kanawha	Greater St. Albans PSD	\$8,000,000
	To provide sanitary sewer service to the community of Tornado, and areas along Smith Creek in the Tornado area.			
23	City of Nitro Blake's Creek Sewer Extension	Kanawha	City of Nitro	\$3,468,000
	To provide sewer service to the unserved residences in the Blake's Creek and Ridenour Lake area of Nitro.			
24	City of Nitro Pocatalico River Sewer Extension	Putnam	City of Nitro	\$1,500,000



	To provide sewer service to the unserved residences in the Pocatalico River area of Nitro.			
25	Putnam PSD Hollywood Dr Sewer Extension	Putnam	Putnam PSD	\$3,000,000
	To provide sewer service to the residents of Hollywood Drive in Putnam County.			
26	Putnam PSD Frasier's Bottom Rt. 817 Sewer Extension	Putnam	Putnam PSD	\$9,945,000
	To provide sewer service to the unserved areas of Fraziers Bottom.			
27	Putnam PSD Upgrade of North Putnam Plant	Putnam	Putnam PSD	\$2,150,000
	To upgrade the North Putnam WWTP.			
28	Lens Creek Sewer Extension Phase I	Kanawha	Kanawha PSD	\$7,875,000
	To provide service to approximately 220 residences along Route 94 (Lens Creek Road) from Marmet to the Boone County Line, to be transported through Chesapeake to the Chelyan facility.			
29	Town of Clay Sanitary Sewer Improvements	Clay	Town of Clay	To be determined
	To rehabilitate the wastewater treatment plant that is failing.			
30	Lens Creek Sewer Extension Phase II	Kanawha	Kanawha PSD	\$4,700,000
	To provide service to approximately 230 residences along Route 94 (Lens Creek Road) from Marmet to the Boone County Line, to be collected at the Marmet WWTP.			
31	Winfield Treatment Plant Replacement	Putnam	Town of Winfield	\$8,000,000
	To replace an outdated lagoon treatment system with a state-of-the-art plant to serve the growing population of Winfield and the surrounding areas.			
32	Rock Creek Industrial Park Sewer Extension	Boone	Boone County PSD	Unknown
	To provide sanitary sewer to the Rock Creek Industrial Park, formerly Hobet Surface Mine.			



33	Upper Witcher Creek Sewer Extension	Kanawha	Kanawha PSD	\$2,100,000
	To provide sewer service to approximately 120 residents along Upper Witcher Creek Road, to be served by the Kanawha PSD Wastewater Treatment Plant in Chelyan.			
34	Boone County Boone Memorial Hospital	Boone	Boone Co PSD	\$722,000
	To provide sewer service to the new Hospital Annex (Former Magic Mart in Danville).			
35 New	Kanawha Manufacturing Building	Putnam	PCDA	\$100,000
	Tie into Putnam PSD sewer at the Kanawha Manufacturing Building (PCDA owned).			
36 New	South Charleston Liberty Street Lift Station	Kanawha	City of South Charleston	\$3,522,850
	Structural rehabilitation of the large Liberty Street Lift Station in South Charleston.			
Community Facilities				
37 New	Property and Building Code Inspector	Kanawha	Town of Clendenin	\$630
	To have a person qualified			
38 New	Virginia Street Gateway Corridor	Kanawha	City Center Business Improvement District/ Charleston Area Alliance	\$4,500,000
	Virginia Street Gateway Corridor			
39 New	Judicial Annex Renovations	Kanawha	Kanawha County Commission	\$14,000,000
	Renovations to the Judicial Annex at the Kanawha County Courthouse.			
40 New	Charleston Public Safety Center	Kanawha	City of Charleston	\$35,000,000
	Charleston Public Safety Center.			



41 New	50th Street Streetscape Project	Kanawha	City of Charleston	\$1,000,000
	50th Street Streetscape Project.			
42 New	Smith Street Streetscape Project	Kanawha	Charleston Urban Renewal Authority/City of Charleston	\$4,600,000
	Smith Street Streetscape Project from Morris Street to Capitol Street.			
43 New	Clendenin Street Paving	Kanawha	Town of Clendenin	\$443,000
	Paving, repairing, fixing potholes			
44 New	Main Streetscape	Kanawha	Town of Clendenin	\$523,000
	Fixing up the street and buildings			
45 New	Clendenin Sidewalks	Kanawha	Town of Clendenin	\$246,000
	Rebuild and repair			
46 New	Marmet Sidewalk Project	Kanawha	Town of Marmet	
	To provide sidewalks and sidewalk upgrades throughout Marmet.			
47	Clay Streetscape Project	Clay	Town of Clay	\$200,000
	To add to the streetscape design in the Town of Clay by increasing the design and implementation of the current streetscape.			
48	Clay Fire Station Rehabilitation	Clay	Clay County Comm	\$241,000
	To purchase and build a new fire station in Clay.			
49	St. Albans Spot Slum and Blight	Kanawha	City of St. Albans	\$150,000



	To promote certain buildings to be demolished in the community and new uses for the vacant land be identified.			
50	Nitro Street Paving on Second Avenue	Kanawha	City of Nitro	\$78,000
	To provide funds to repave Second Avenue in the City of Nitro.			
51	Orchard Manor Bridge Replacement	Kanawha	City of Charleston	\$600,000
	To replace the bridge to a low housing area in the City of Charleston.			
52	Dunbar Sidewalk and Street Paving Project	Kanawha	City of Dunbar	\$398,614
	To provide funding for street paving and sidewalk repair to the main thoroughfares of the City.			
53	Dunbar 10th Street Streetscape	Kanawha	City of Dunbar	\$252,153
	To provide a streetscape to the entrance of the City of Dunbar from South Charleston via the Dunbar Toll Bridge.			
54	Dunbar Safe Route to Schools - Sidewalk Project	Kanawha	City of Dunbar	\$130,000
	To provide sidewalks as part of the safe route to schools Department of Transportation grant program.			
55	Eleanor Handicapped Accessibility - City Hall	Putnam	Town of Eleanor	\$16,000
	To provide access to the Historic Red House building that is also the seat of government for the Town of Eleanor.			
56	Montgomery Community Center on Morris Drive	Kanawha	City of Montgomery	\$4,000,000
	To construct a Community Center along Morris Drive in Kanawha County for the residents of the area.			
57	Handicapped Access and Elevator - City Hall	Kanawha	Town of Clendenin	\$84,000
	To construct an elevator to the town council chambers on the second floor of Town Hall. The stairs are very steep.			



58 New	Tow of Clay Main Street Building Facades	Clay	Town of Clay	Unknown
	To upgrade the building facades along Main Street in the Town of Clay.			
Economic Development Initiatives				
59	West Virginia Regional Technology Park	Kanawha	WV HEPC	To Be Determined
	To promote continued development and utilization of the WVRTP as a research and business park. Currently the Park is home to a community college, AVN research facility, TechConnectWV, Chemical Alliance Zone, WV and a number of private companies.			
60 New	Grade Phase II of Putnam Business Park	Putnam	PCDA	\$2,000,000
	Grading the second phase of the Putnam Business Park (approximately 20 acres).			
61 New	LIFT Center	Kanawha	Charleston Area Alliance	\$20,000,000
	Redevelopment of the former Kanawha Manufacturing			
62 New	Capitol Market Facility Improvements	Kanawha	Capitol Market	\$2,500,000
	Facility improvements to the Capitol Market.			
63	ChemCeption Business Incubator	Kanawha	WV HEPC	To Be Determined
	To define an Incubator specifically designed for the chemical industry that will foster new concepts in the chemical Industry.			
64	Smith Street and Leon Sullivan Way Streetscape	Kanawha	WV DOT	\$4,000,000
	This streetscape is a welcome entrances to the East End neighborhood which is home to the City's Historical District.			
65	Clay County Industrial Park	Clay	CAEZ	\$5,000,000



	To develop a commercial / industrial park and spec building that will serve either for rental or sale to increase jobs and increase the vitality of the local economy. Clay County has lost much of its tax base and ancillary businesses because of the closure of Fola (Consolidation) Coal. The area needs to see a revitalization of their job base to sustain their economy.			
66	Kanawha County Industrial Park	Kanawha	CAA	To Be Determined
	To determine a location and develop an industrial park. The Land Task Force has identified a few possible sites and are evaluating the scope and cost of site development.			
67	Upper K Trails Plan (Upper Kanawha Valley Outdoor Recreation Plan)	Kanawha Fayette	Kanawha County Commission	\$15,000,000
	This project would expand recreation from Charleston to the New River Gorge connecting the Mammoth Preserve, the Elk River Trail State Park, the Kanawha State Forest and the Hatfield's and McCoy's Trail Organization with Hiking, biking motorized travel, water travel and all forms of outdoor recreation.			
68	Capitol Connector Project	Kanawha	City of Charleston	\$25,000,000
	Promote the Kanawha Boulevard area as a premier location for a riverscape area for businesses to locate. This will consist of residential, retail and commercial locations along the Kanawha Boulevard from Magic Island to the Kanawha City Bridge.			
69	Improvements to US 60 in Kanawha County	Kanawha	WV DOT	\$31,300,000
	This project would widen to a four-lane divided facility from the Admiral TJ Lopez Bridge (Chelyan Bridge) to CR 81 (Kellys Creek Road). This widening of US Route 60 would enhance the ability for business to grow and prosper in the Upper Kanawha Valley, an area affected by the loss of coal and coal-related employment.			
70	Third Street Underpass Improvements in St. Albans	Kanawha	St Albans	\$9,600,000
	To widen the existing railroad underpass to three lanes and improve vertical clearance. This will open the City of St Albans to a free-flowing access to the main section of the city. There are many commercial and retail sites available for expansion in the city core.			
71	West Washington Streetscape	Kanawha	WV DOT	\$5,000,000
	To provide a gateway entrance that will assist in the appeal of the West Side and help the West Side Main Street Association attract new businesses and assist current companies to expand. This complex street scape should be separated into six phases and would provide construction jobs and attract investment.			
72	Coal Related Job Retraining	All	Workforce	To Be Determined



	To develop retraining or assist new businesses that will diversify the coal related economy.			
73	Water and Sewer Projects to Industrial/Commercial Parks	All	Any Utility	To Be Determined
	Any project that will assist commercial or industrial businesses compete in the local, regional and global markets.			
74	Rock Creek Development Park	Boone	Unknown	\$100,000,000
	To develop the Hobet surface mine to a residential, commercial and industrial facility that would be self-contained in Southern West Virginia. Thousands of acres of developable land waiting for visions.			
75	Central West Virginia Trails Group	Clay, Roane, Braxton	CAEZ	\$500,000
	To develop a walking, riding and biking trail network much like the successful Hatfield and McCoy trail system.			
76	Upper Kanawha Valley Gateway Project	Kanawha, Fayette, and Clay	Region 3, Region 4	Unknown
	To develop a Gateway Project from the Upper Kanawha Valley to the natural beauty to the New River Gorge in Fayette County. This project is combined with the Upper Kanawha Valley Outdoor Recreation Plan.			
77	City Center Business Improvement District	Kanawha	Charleston	\$14,000,000
	To redevelop the area around Slack Plaza			
78	Coal River Park	Kanawha	City of St Albans	\$1,700,000
	To develop a community park along the Coal River near the mouth of the Kanawha			
79	Capitol Sports Complex	Kanawha	Kanawha County Commission & City of Charleston	\$80,000,000
	To develop a Sports Complex in the Charleston Town Center Parking garages to bring sports tournaments to the area.			
80 New	Developable Properties in Putnam County	Putnam	PCDA	\$1,000,000



	Purchase additional, developable properties in Putnam County			
81 New	Kanawha Manufacturing Building	Putnam	PCDA	\$75,000
	Complete a site plan on the Kanawha Manufacturing Building.			
82 New	Economic Development Incubator for Clay County	Clay	Clay County Commission	Unknown
	To start an economic development incubator to assist in the startup of new businesses			
83 New	City of South Charleston Park Place Public Infrastructure	Kanawha	City of Charleston	\$5,000,000
	Grant from the WV Water Development Authority for the public infrastructure at Park Place in the City of South Charleston.			
Economic Development Planning Initiatives				
84	Charleston Master Plan and Economic Analysis	Kanawha	City of Charleston	\$500,000
85	Hobet Properties	Boone	BCEDA	\$200,000
86	Nitro Brownfields Redevelopment Assessment	Putnam	PCDA	\$200,000
87	Upper K Trails Engineering Design for Upper Kanawha Valley	Kanawha	Kanawha County Commission	\$1,000,000
Broadband Projects				
88	Clay County Broadband Implementation Grant	Clay	County Commission	\$1,815,000
89	Clay County Broadband Design Grant	Clay	Clay County	\$150,000
90	Boone County Rock Creek Broadband Connectivity	Boone	Boone County Development Authority	\$1,800,000
91	Upper Kanawha County Connectivity Project	Kanawha	Kanawha County	To Be Determined



92	Whiteville Connectivity Project	Boone	Town of Whitesville	\$30,000
Storm Sewer Projects				
93 New	Clendenin Town Storm Drain	Kanawha	Town of Clendenin	\$625,000
	To provide storm drainage to areas when rainfall			
94	Town of Buffalo Storm Sewer Project Along Timms Street	Putnam	Town of Buffalo	\$800,000
	To provide storm sewers to 25 families along Timms Street and adjoining streets.			
95	Madison Storm Drainage Project	Boone	City of Madison	\$500,000
	To provide storm drainage to areas that flood in high rainfall.			
96	Chesapeake Storm Sewer Project Along Railroad	Kanawha	Town of Chesapeake	\$250,000
	To provide storm drainage to areas that flood in high rainfall.			
97	Boundary Street Storm Sewer	Kanawha	City of Nitro	\$250,000
	To provide storm drainage to areas that flood in high rainfall.			
98	85th and 98th Street Storm Sewers	Kanawha	Town of Marmet	\$641,000
	To provide storm drainage to areas that flood in high rainfall.			
99	Chesterfield Avenue Storm Sewer	Kanawha	City of Charleston	\$783,000
	To provide storm drainage to areas that flood in high rainfall.			
100	Garrison Avenue Flood Drainage	Kanawha	City of Charleston	\$500,000



	To provide storm drainage to areas that flood in high rainfall.			
101	Parson's Court/5th Avenue Flood Drainage	Kanawha	Charleston	\$500,000
	To provide storm drainage to areas that flood in high rainfall.			
102	Glasgow Municipal Storm Sewers	Kanawha	Town of Glasgow	\$550,000
	To provide storm drainage to areas that flood in high rainfall.			
103	Teays Valley Storm Water Improvements	Putnam	Putnam County Planning	\$18,000,000
	To provide storm drainage to areas that flood in high rainfall.			
104	Winfield Stormwater Improvements	Putnam	Town of Winfield	\$2,000,000
	To provide storm drainage to areas that flood in high rainfall.			
105	Millard and Linda Avenue Storm Sewers	Putnam	City of Hurricane	\$115,000
	To provide storm drainage to areas that flood in high rainfall.			
106	Eleanor Storm Sewers	Putnam	Town of Eleanor	\$500,000
	To provide storm drainage to areas that flood in high rainfall.			
107	Buffalo Phase II Storm Sewer Project	Putnam	Town of Buffalo	\$496,300
	To provide storm drainage to areas that flood in high rainfall.			
108	Long-term Stormwater Control - MS4	Kanawha	City of St Albans	\$500,000
	To provide a plan to alleviate storm drainage in all areas of the City of St. Albans.			



109	Flood Control Along Curtiss, Monmouth, Walnut and Kanawha Terrace	Kanawha	City of St Albans	\$7,000,000
	To provide storm drainage to areas that flood in high rainfall.			
110	Rand Storm Sewer Project	Kanawha	Kanawha County	\$13,000,000
	To provide storm drainage to areas that flood in high rainfall. WV DOH providing study.			
Recreation Projects				
111	Improvements to Community Pool	Clay	Clay County Commission	\$100,000
	To upgrade the Clay County Pool and bathrooms.			
112	Playground Equipment	Kanawha	City of Clendenin	\$323,000
	Swings, slides, basketball courts, pickleball court, splashpad			
113 New	Rail trail upkeep	Kanawha	Town of Clendenin	\$75,000
	Paving, mowing, tree trim			
114 New	Shawnee Sports Complex Renovations	Kanawha	Kanawha County Commission	\$5,000,000
	Renovations to Shawnee Sports Complex Renovations / Rebuild Welcome Center.			
115	Livestock and Multi-use Pavilion	Clay	Clay County Commission	\$355,000
	To build a multipurpose build that will house all facets of the park.			
116	Community Center	Kanawha	St Albans	\$1,500,000
	To build a community center for the youth of the City of St Albans.			



117	Riverfront Park, Boat Ramp and Picnic Shelter	Kanawha	Town of Cedar Grove	\$210,000
	To develop a boat ramp and picnic area near the community park and playground in Cedar Grove.			
118	Playground Equipment	Putnam	Town of Poca	\$13,446
	To provide playground equipment to various park areas.			
119	Putnam County Parks Playground Equipment	Putnam	Putnam County Parks	\$110,000
	To add playground equipment to various parks in Putnam County.			
120	South Hurricane Recreation Area	Putnam	City of Hurricane	\$325,000
	To add to the park system for the City of Hurricane.			
121	Walking Path and Bridge Wellness Trail	Boone	Town of Danville & Madison	\$875,000
	To construct a bridge and extend a walking trail to connect to the current Madison Wellness Trail. (Bridge is complete)			
122	Marina along Kanawha River	Kanawha	City of Montgomery	\$4,000,000
	To develop a marina along the Kanawha River for the Upper Kanawha Valley.			
123	Riverscape Park and Boat Launch	Kanawha	City of South Charleston	\$6,000,000
	To provide a boat launch and park under the 1-64 Bridge in South Charleston.			
124	Sylvester Pavilion Park	Boone	Sylvester	\$200,000
	To make improvements to the Sylvester Park, previously the Sylvester Elementary site.			
125	Madison Trailhead and Canoe Livery	Boone	Madison	\$100,000



	To provide a canoe launch and trailhead at the former Haddad Swimming Pool.			
126	Splash Park at County Parks & Recreation Property	Boone	Boone County Comm	\$120,000
	To provide a splash park at county parks & recreation property for the residents.			
Demolition Projects				
127	Demolition of Dilapidated Buildings	Kanawha	Kanawha County Commission	\$1,500,000
	Remove building that have become unlivable			
128	Demolition Project of Buildings	Clay	Clay County Comm	\$350,000
	Demolish houses and businesses in Clay			
129	Demolition Project of Buildings	Kanawha	Town of Marmet	\$250,000
	Demolish houses and businesses in Marmet			
130 New	Demolition Project in Madison	Boone	Town of Madison	Unknown
	Demolish dilapidated houses and buildings in Madison.			
131 New	Demolition Project in Whitesville	Boone	Town of Whitesville	Unknown
	Demolition of dilapidated houses and buildings in Whitesville.			
Historic Preservation Projects				
132	Restoration of City Hall	Kanawha	City of Charleston	\$100,000
	Restoration of City Hall.			



133 New	Clendenin Theatre- Historic Ray	Kanawha	Town of Clendenin	\$650,000
	rebuild the entire interior of theatre for multipurpose			
134 New	Restoration of City Hall	Kanawha	Town of Clendenin	\$523,000
	Tear out, fix up, remodel, accessibility improvements			
135 New	Restoration of County Courthouse	Clay	Clay County Commission	\$250,000
	Complete Restoration			
136	Buffalo Academy Rehabilitation	Putnam	Town of Buffalo	\$100,000
	To rehabilitate the Buffalo Academy which is on the National Register of Historic Places.			
137 New	Municipal Auditorium Rehabilitation	Kanawha	City of Charleston	25,000,000
	Rehabilitation of the Municipal Auditorium.			
Housing Projects				
138	Elderly and Handicapped Housing Units	Kanawha	City of St Albans	\$2,000,000
	To provide additional units for the elderly and handicapped residents of St Albans.			
Planning Projects				
139	City-Wide Storm Drainage Improvement Study	Kanawha	City of St Albans	\$44,000
	To conduct a city-wide storm drainage improvement study for the City of St Albans.			
140	Comprehensive Storm Water Evaluation	Kanawha	City of Charleston	\$700,000



Any project that will assist commercial or industrial businesses compete in the local, regional and global markets.				
141	CSO and Asset Management Plan of Town Sewer	Kanawha	Town of Cedar Grove	\$100,000
	To provide a CSO and Asset Management Plan for Cedar Grove to develop plans for a sanitary sewer upgrade.			
142	Buffalo Region Zoning Ordinance Study	Putnam	Putnam County Planning	\$50,000
	Identify zoning ordinances and study their effects on the region.			
143	Buffalo Region Drainage Improvement Study	Putnam	Putnam County Planning	\$50,000
	Conduct a study of the drainage improvement for the Town of Buffalo.			
144	Putnam County Recreational Trails Master Plan	Putnam	Putnam County Parks	\$50,000
145	Headwaters of the Elk	Kanawha	Kanawha County Commission	\$725,000
146 New	Bike Lane Study on Virginia Street & Quarrier Street	Kanawha	City of Charleston	\$200,000
	Bike Lane Study on Virginia Street & Quarrier Street.			
Additional Projects Added				
147 New	Chandler Drive Storm Sewer	Kanawha	City of Charleston	\$2,000,000
	Chandler Drive is served by a deteriorating storm sewer that was installed in the 1970s. The main storm sewer on Chandler Drive is approximately 3,000 feet of corrugated metal pipe with additional smaller storm sewers connected to main sewer. The poor condition of the storm sewer is causing large sinkholes to form along the pipe, which presents a danger to the public. The storm sewer needs to be replaced to eliminate the danger to the public and provide a properly functioning drainage system.			



Note: Acronyms	
Boone Community Economic Development Authority	BCCEDA
Charleston Area Alliance	CAA
Central Appalachia Enterprise Zone	CAEZ
Putnam County Development Authority	PCDA
WV Department of Transportation	WV DOT
WV Higher Education Policy Commission	WV HEPC
Upper Kanawha Valley Enterprise Community	UKVEC



C. 2024 - 2028 CEDS Advisory Committee

FY 2024 - 2028 CEDS Advisory Committee

David Coll, Putnam County Commission

Kris Mitchell, Boone County Development Authority

Morganne Tenney, Putnam County Development Authority

Rick Atkinson, City of South Charleston

Kim Reed, Nitro Development Authority

Susan Salisbury, Charleston Area Alliance

Connie Kinder, Clay County Commission

Clark McCoy, West Virginia Regional Technical Park Corporation

Mark Sankoff, Potesta Engineering

Barry McCune, Clay County Bank

Andrew Backus, City of Charleston

Matt Sutton, City of Charleston

Lee Roberts, City of St. Albans

James Owrey, Mountaineer Gas Company



**Regional Intergovernmental Council
FY 2024 - 2028 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
Committee Meeting**

**May 7, 2024
1:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

Attending:

Rick Atkinson, City of South Charleston
David Coll, Putnam County Commission
SoJuana Ellis, Regional Intergovernmental Council
Tyler Ferrell, Regional Intergovernmental Council
Joanna Keller, Regional Intergovernmental Council
Connie Kinder, Clay County Commission
Clark McCoy, West Virginia Regional Technology Park Corporation
Kris Mitchell, Boone County Development Authority
Susan Salisbury, Charleston Area Alliance
Mark Sankoff, Potesta Engineering

The meeting was held in the Regional Intergovernmental Council conference room with a virtual option through Zoom. Tyler Ferrell, Executive Director, Regional Intergovernmental Council called the meeting to order.

I. Review & Update Regional and County Project List

Tyler Ferrell referred the committee members to the proposed Regional & Community Priority Project Listing which was distributed to the committee members by email. The committee reviewed the list and discussed what changes and additions they would like to make. Committee members agreed to email any additional recommendations by the end of the week.

II. Review & Update SWOT

Tyler Ferrell referred the committee members to the proposed SWOT Analysis which was distributed to the committee members by email. He asked if there were comments, suggestions, additions, or changes. The committee reviewed and discussed what changes and additions they would like to make to the SWOT Analysis.

III. Review & Update Goals, Objectives, and Development Strategies



Tyler Ferrell referred the committee members to the proposed CEDS Goals, Objectives & Development Strategies. A detailed document of suggestions from the Charleston Area Alliance was provided by Susan Salisbury. The suggestions were discussed in detail and the group collectively agreed to accept the recommended changes provided by the Charleston Area Alliance. The RIC staff will review the document provided by Susan Salisbury and send any changes out to the committee.

IV. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.



V. Economic Resilience

It is becoming increasingly apparent that the Regional Intergovernmental Council, a four-county planning and development council, consider economic prosperity is linked to an area's ability to prevent, withstand and quickly recover from major disruptions to its economic base. Establishing economic resilience in a local or regional economy requires the ability to anticipate risk, evaluate how that risk can impact key economic assets, and build a responsive capacity. Often, the shocks/disruptions to the economic base of an area or region are manifested in these ways:

- Downturns or other significant events in the coal industry which impact demand for locally produced goods and consumer spending.
- Downturns in coal related industries constitute a critical component of the region's economic activity.
- Other external shocks such as the June 23, 2016 flood that decimated Clendenin and Clay County areas and the COVID – 19 Pandemic that has caused economic disruptions and instability not only in our region, state and country but also throughout the entire world.

This is no more apparent than the downturn in the coal industry in our region and the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Regional Intergovernmental Councils Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy begins to build the capacity for economic resilience. The members of this committee often become the focal point for post-incident coordination, information dissemination, responding to external inquiries, and the lead grant administrator for local, state and federally funded recovery initiatives.

In building economic resilience, it is critical that this organization consider its role in the pre-incident and post-incident environment to include proactive and responsive initiatives.



VI. Evaluation Framework

Performance Measures and Outcomes

The completion of the CEDS is an important achievement for Region III because it allows our staff to evaluate the success of projects and provides the Council with a way to determine priorities and goals for the future. The Regional Intergovernmental Council evaluates the success of the CEDS with the following measurements:

1. **Number of Applications Completed** - this measurement shows the continued need of Region III's services and the projects and priorities that our local communities are wanting to complete.
2. **Number of Projects Administered by Staff** - this measurement shows the need for Region III's services in providing project administration in completing the region's priorities.
3. **Number of New Customers Served with Infrastructure (water, sewer, broadband)** - This measurement reflects the number of new customers receiving water and sewer. These types of services continue to rank close to the top priorities our region identifies annually.
4. **Amount of New Jobs Created as a Result of the CEDS** - this measurement illustrates the number of new jobs created with the assistance of the Regional Intergovernmental Council.
5. **Amount of Private Sector Investment** - this measurement shows the amount of private sector dollars invested in this region as a result of the CEDS.



VII. Appendix

Sources:

Appalachian Regional Commission
Charleston Gazette-Mail
Coal Valley News
FRED Economic Data
Herald-Dispatch
Montgomery Herald
Boone County Development Authority
Putnam County Development Authority
TechConnectWV
Clay County Free Press
Workforce WV
West Virginia Division of Culture and History
WV Metro News
Statista
Statistical Atlas
STATS America
United States Census Bureau
United States Energy Information Administration
West Virginia Department of Transportation
West Virginia Division of Natural Resources
West Virginia Secretary of State Business Statistics Database
West Virginia Broadband Enhancement Council
West Virginia Office of Broadband
Statistical Atlas

