

January 2026 TRRC Awards:

Incentives and Loans

TRRC/VSBFA Lending Partnership Program

Created in January 2024, the Commission's lending partnership program with the Virginia Small Business Financing Authority (VSBFA) deploys funding to support economic development and job creation in the tobacco region through loans to companies and organizations engaged in agriculture, energy and economic development. Because of the program's success, it is approaching its initial \$10M cap and the Commission voted to raise the cap to \$20M.

Economic Development Workforce Housing Incentive Pilot Program

Since approval at the Commission's May 2024 meeting, the Workforce Housing Incentive Pilot Program has received a high level of interest from stakeholders and prospective investors. Commission staff continue to engage with community members and developers to discover new projects that will provide workforce housing in the Tobacco Region.

Lee County

Site Work and Water/Wastewater Infrastructure to Support 115 New Housing Units - \$800,000 Grant

This award will support the construction of 115 new housing units on the campus of Lincoln Memorial University's (LMU) DeBusk Veterinary Teaching Center to serve students, faculty, and staff. At least 22 units will be reserved for households earning between 120% and 150% AMI. Lee County has assembled more than \$4.5 million in grant funding for site development costs to support the project. Commission funds will complement these investments by supporting water and wastewater infrastructure in advance of the housing development to be undertaken by LMU.

Maritime Investment & Supply Chain Transformation (MAST) Fund

The MAST Fund unlocks TRRC financing to attract and expand small and medium-sized maritime and shipbuilding supply-chain companies in Southern and Southwest Virginia, further leveraging Virginia's strong naval presence at the Port of Virginia and the Tobacco Region's skilled advanced manufacturing workforce. The fund can provide below-market loans and economic development incentives grants to close capital gaps for suppliers, leverage private investment, and support manufacturing expansion, modernization, and job creation. TRRC will leverage its existing partnership with the Virginia Small Business

Financing Authority to implement this program by opening eligibility to small and medium-sized enterprises in the maritime, shipbuilding, and defense industrial base supply chain.

TRRC Drone Fund

The Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), or drone, industry is expanding rapidly, driven by applications in energy, agriculture, infrastructure inspection, emergency response, and defense. The launch of this fund aims to capture a portion of this rapidly growing industry and bring it to Southern and Southwest Virginia by closing capital gaps for companies seeking to accelerate drone-related product commercialization. The fund will allow for performance-based incentive grants to companies, as well as loans to investors by leveraging TRRC's partnership with VSBFA by expanding eligibility to UAS-related firms. Eligible applicants include UAS manufacturers, integrators, platform developers, and Tier 2 and Tier 3 suppliers (including propulsion, batteries, sensors, communications, navigation, composites, and manufacturing tooling), as well as groups providing ground and infrastructure support.

Danville Gas Line Extension

The Commission approved a loan through its Community and Business Lending (CBL) Program for \$2M to the City of Danville for no more than a ten-year term at an annual interest rate of 3.25% to finance gas infrastructure improvements that will allow Danville to provide gas service to the Southern Virginia Megasite at Berry Hill. The Commission also formally withdrew a loan approved in October 2023 for up to \$25M to the Danville-Pittsylvania Regional Industrial Facility Authority Commission Meeting to bring new gas service to Berry Hill.

Project Delta

The Commission reapproved the May 2024 loan made to the Scott County IDA of up to \$5,985,000 or 90% of total project costs, at an interest rate of 2.5% through the Commission's Community and Business Lending (CBL) program, for construction of a 70-room, branded hotel. The Commission delegated authority to the Executive Director to finalize the loan agreement based on the conditions of the term sheet provided by the Virginia Resource Authority in 2022 for this project. The loan offer expires on December 31, 2026.

Brunswick County IDA Produce Project

The Commission approved a total of up to \$4M in loan funds, through its Lending Partnership program with VSBFA, to be made available to the Industrial Development Authority of Brunswick County with a ten year term and 5% annual interest rate to help fund the construction of a packing plant located in Alberta, VA to support local growers with a means to sort, store, and ship produce. The loan will be contingent upon a recommendation of approval from VSBFA.

Energy Ingenuity

Energy Catalyst – Planning Grants

(#4451) A. L. Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partnership d/b/a GENEDGE Alliance E-3 Assessment for Industrial Training Assessment Center (ITAC) Implementation Grant Qualification Program - \$50,000 Grant

This award will support manufacturers across Southwest Virginia in reducing energy costs and boosting energy resiliency by providing funding to GENEDGE to produce three ITAC-equivalent assessments for select manufacturers across the region. The project will provide funding to support GENEDGE to assist manufacturers in identifying equipment needs, systems review, and level of effort necessary in completing the assessment. Additionally, funding will support GENEDGE in assisting participants in navigation of the DOE ITAC grant application process. The initiative will assist in improving energy efficiency, environmental performance, and operational resilience for manufacturers in Southwest Virginia. Commission funds will support 50% of each manufacturer's contracted cost for assessments and application assistance.

(#4452) A. L. Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partnership d/b/a GENEDGE Alliance Southern and Southwest Virginia Grid Resiliency and Industrial Competitiveness Study - \$36,250 Grant (\$18,250)

This award will support a study to assess the capacity of the current electrical grid and its ability to support both existing and future industrial growth. The study will cover high-energy-consuming manufacturers and model their future energy demand growth to evaluate potential future grid energy constraints. The study builds on the Commission's commitment to support economic development by providing a framework for stakeholders, utilities, and policymakers to guide efficient grid expansion. Commission funds will go to support up to 50% of the costs associated with third-party services related to the completion of this study.

(#4453) A. L. Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partnership d/b/a GENEDGE Alliance Energy Supply Chain Resiliency and Industrial Competitiveness Study for Southside and Southwest Virginia - \$36,250 Grant (\$18,000)

The award will support a study to assess the accessibility, distribution, and competitiveness of energy-related equipment and component suppliers serving manufacturers within Southern and Southwest Virginia. The study aims to identify supply chain gaps, reduce costs, and keep at-risk manufacturers anchored in the region. Commission funding will support 50% of third-party professional services related to the development of the study.

Note: Projects #4452 and #4453 were bundled and awarded together with \$36,250 in total funds awarded across the two projects. The specific funding each project will receive is reflected in the heading of their entry.

(#4440) Town of Bedford

Snowden Hydro Project Repowering Old Plant - \$50,000 Grant

This award will provide funding for the next step in a feasibility study for an expansion of capacity for an existing hydro power plant in the Town of Bedford. The focus of the study is to determine if the existing system can sustain additional capacity to accommodate more energy generation. Currently, the Snowden Plant supplies 10% of Bedford's energy generation at 5,000 kW, and the expansion would raise this to 6,000kW. Additionally, the study will highlight the prospective costs of any such expansion along with the costs of a potential battery system to store excess energy that can be used during peak cost hours, as well as the potential for additional solar power to also be located on the site. Preliminary estimates suggest the study and project, if successful, could boost energy production by an additional \$110,000 in energy costs annually. Commission funds will support up to 50% of third-party costs for the study.

(#4438) Buckingham County Gridiron - \$50,000 Grant

This award will provide funding for a Small Modular Reactor (SMR) feasibility and site readiness study. Funds will support professional assessments to determine technical, environmental, and regulatory stability to produce a feasibility report and roadmap for future energy developments. This report will identify suitable SMR development sites along with a detailed technical and regulatory assessment. Accurate capture of this data provides the first steps required to attract private investment and commitment for future SMR development regions across Buckingham County. Commission funds will support up to 50% of third-party costs for professional contractual services.

(#4448) Virginia Department of Forestry

Woody Biomass Energy Opportunity Analysis in Southwest Virginia Tobacco Region - \$50,000 Grant

This award will provide funds for a partnership between the TRRC and Wilson Engineering Services to produce feasibility studies exploring the installation of smaller, more efficient wood energy systems in the Southwest Tobacco Region. The project seeks to leverage the state's 16 million acres of forest resources to expand renewable energy through the utilization of abundant woody biomass resources in the area. The study will focus on high demand facilities such as greenhouses, hospitals, industrial operations, and schools. The study will provide information about the availability, cost, and financial viability of biomass resources. Funding from the Commission will go specifically towards supporting contractual engineering services related to this study for up to 50% of contracted third-party services.

(#4449) Virginia Department of Forestry

Woody Biomass Energy Opportunity Analysis in Southside Virginia Tobacco Region - \$50,000 Grant

This award will provide funds for a partnership between TRRC and Wilson Engineering Services to produce feasibility studies exploring the installation of smaller, more efficient, wood energy systems in the Southern Tobacco Region. The project seeks to leverage the state's 16 million acres of forest resources to expand renewable energy through the utilization of abundant woody biomass resources in the area. The study will focus on high demand facilities such as greenhouses, hospitals, industrial operations, and schools. The study will provide information about the availability, cost, and financial viability of biomass resources. Funding from the Commission will go specifically towards supporting contractual engineering services related to this study for up to 50% of contracted third party services.

Southwest Virginia

Agribusiness

(#4416) Lee County Livestock Association

Forage Production Initiative for Southwest Virginia: Round III - \$101,000 Grant

This award will continue a cost-share program serving farmers in Lee, Scott, Wise, Dickenson, Buchanan, Russell, Tazewell, Washington, Smyth, Wythe, Grayson, Carroll, and Bland Counties. This will be the third, and final, funding round of the program. The program assists participants with the purchase of eligible forage production equipment such as no-till drills, fertilizer spreaders, hay wrappers, testing equipment, etc. Additionally, the application will provide reimbursement for hay storage and permanent and temporary fencing. These programs will result in improved forage quality and storage capability for regional producers. The equipment and infrastructure improvements associated with this cost-share program result in increased profitability while also increasing soil health and animal nutrition. The application estimates that the economic benefit for a farmer who increases grazing by 60 days and increases hay storage is approximately \$15,000 annually.

Business Development

(#4418) Appalachian Highlands Housing Partners

HOMEWorks: Housing Opportunity & Modular Education Works in Russell County, VA - \$409,233 Grant

This award will support the renovation of a 92,000-square-foot vacant industrial building located in Russell County into a Modular Training and Production Facility. This dual-purpose facility will manufacture affordable modular homes for moderate-income families (80-120% AMI) by combining workforce development with small-scale housing manufacturing. The project is expected to produce 81 jobs, 50 internships, 20 apprenticeships, and 140 workforce housing credentials, and produce over 750 homes in the next 5 years. Commission funds will support up to 50% of architecture and engineering expenses with the remainder of the award being allocated to renovation costs.

(#4420) Town of Bluefield

Revitalizing Downtown Bluefield - \$250,000 Grant

This award will support the renovation of the former Graham Jewelry building in the Town of Bluefield to attract new businesses. The Industrial Development Authority (IDA) will restore the 4,000-square-foot building to full operability, transforming it into a modern commercial space capable of supporting two new business activities. Upon completion, the project is expected to create 10–15 new jobs. The first floor of the building will be designed for retail

or dining use, while the second floor will be converted into a communications lab. Commission funds will be used first to cover renovation costs (\$235,000), with the remaining funds devoted to architectural and engineering services (\$15,000).

Sites and Infrastructure

(#4422) Economic Development Authority of Floyd County

Virginia Floyd Regional Commerce Center Phase 2: Developing Business Ready Sites - \$500,000 Grant

This award will support contractual services and property improvements to develop 20–24 acres of business-ready sites in Floyd County as part of Phase II of the Floyd Regional Commerce Center. Project activities include the installation of a second public water line to provide redundancy and connect a potential new PSA well, as well as the installation of conduit for 3-phase power. The award will be submitted in support of Floyd County's efforts to secure funding from the U.S. EDA by providing the required matching funds in advance of the application process in collaboration with other partners. If successful, EDA funding would cover up to 80 percent of total project costs. If funding is secured, the project is expected to create approximately 110 new jobs and attract \$168 million in new private investment to the County.

(#4421) Joint IDA of Wythe County

VA Advancing Progress Park Site Readiness - \$121,650 Grant

This award will support due diligence, design, and permitting needed to construct graded pads for Lots 1 and 32 at Progress Park in Wythe County. These sites are 105 and 70 (+/-) acres, respectively, and are the next suitable targets for development in the park. Lots 1 and 32 could each support a facility of at least 1 million square feet. Upon completion of this project, Lots 1 and 32 will be eligible for Tier 5 certification under VEDP's Business Ready Sites Program assessment, meaning that the lots will be considered at the highest level of development readiness.

Tourism

(#4426) Friends of Southwest Virginia

Southwest Virginia Creative Economy Planning & Outdoor Recreation Business Recruitment Initiative - \$127,000 Grant

This award will support the development of a creative economy dashboard, creative economy plan, strategic plan, and marketing for Friends of Southwest Virginia. The creative economy dashboard will provide decision-makers, funders, and communities with real time insights into visitation, spending, job creation, and private investment, and it will

publish quarterly reports for stakeholders. The creative economy plan will establish a 10-year roadmap for tourism and creative economic development, guiding public and private investment decisions. The completion of the proposed planning activities will guide future development and ensure that Friends, and related stakeholders, understand the roles, responsibilities, and resources required to implement new projects. Commission funds will be applied toward eligible costs for third-party contractual services related to the proposed planning activities.

(#4430) Russell County Board of Supervisors

**Three Rivers Destination Center – Planning Grant for A&E and Construction Readiness
- \$260,000 Grant**

This award will go to support the completion of planning and design work for the Three Rivers Destination Center in St. Paul. The funding will cover all tasks necessary to make the project construction ready, including property survey and subsurface investigations, architectural and engineering design, site preparation plans, landscape and gateway design, exhibit and interior schematics, permitting, and final construction cost estimates. The Three Rivers Destination Center will provide space for visitor services, workforce training, and outfitter certification, while also linking guests to the Clinch River State Park and nearby trails, rivers, and downtowns. The project is estimated to indirectly support the creation of 75 new jobs, attract over 9,000 new visitors to the region, and generate over \$800,000 in new visitor spending revenue.

(#4428) Scott County Economic Development Authority

Carter Family Fold 2027 and Beyond - \$212,125 Grant

This award will go to support operational expenses associated with the hiring of a new Executive Director, development of a comprehensive website, and creation of a strategic marketing plan for the Carter Family Fold in Scott County. The requested funding will provide for three years of staffing for the Executive Director position and the development of a targeted marketing strategy designed to expand audiences and strengthen long-term financial sustainability. The Carter Family Fold is already one of the most well-known music venues in the region, and Commission funding is estimated to increase visitation to the region by 10% and generate over \$1.8 million in new visitor spending. Commission funding will be used to reimburse up to 50% of eligible project costs once implemented.

(#4427) Smyth County Economic Development Authority
Salt Trail Master Plan for Impact and Sustainability - \$40,000 Grant

This award will go to support the development of a Master Plan for the 8.5-mile Salt Trail that runs through both Smyth and Washington Counties. The Master Plan will identify critical capital improvements to be accomplished as well as future phases that will connect the trail to other assets such as Downtown Glade Springs, Emory & Henry University, and Downtown Meadowview. The proposed planning project will design a promotional infrastructure to develop and sustain awareness of the Salt Trail's importance to the regional outdoor recreational cluster, as well as address long-term maintenance of the trail. Commission funds will be allocated to support up to 50% of the cost of eligible third-party services related to the development of the master plan.

(#4425) Theatre Guild of Buchanan County
Renovations and Improvements at The CAM Part 2 - \$132,702 Grant

This award will support renovations at the Community Arts Mainstage (CAM) Theater in Grundy, VA. The theater, which opened in 2021 in a repurposed industrial building, requires additional work to complete necessary facility improvements. Funds will be used for materials and labor to refurbish the main stage floor, install exterior industrial guttering, and complete drainage and parking lot ditch work to address water damage to the facility. The Commission has previously supported the development of CAM through Grant #4184 in 2024. Since then, the theater has offered 35 performances to over 6,500 guests, with signs of future growth in attendance. Traffic to the theater supports its local economy through traffic to local businesses and the use of catering services. Continued Commission support from this round of funding is estimated to significantly increase unduplicated attendance and visitor spending by \$130,000, and to create 2 new jobs. Commission funds will be allocated directly to address facility renovations.