



## Appalachian Power starts construction of downtown Roanoke parking facility



Appalachian Power officials recently commemorated the beginning of construction of a multi-level parking structure as part of a 2017-announced project that will bring 200 employees into its downtown Roanoke office building. The additional employees are from sister company AEP Transmission.

Appalachian is remodeling about 66,000 square feet of the 40 Franklin Rd. building and held a groundbreaking ceremony for the parking facility to accommodate the additional employees. Another 200 Appalachian employees already work in the almost 70-year old structure.

The event was attended by City of Roanoke Councilman John Garland and other dignitaries.

“Appalachian Power is extremely happy to be able to have these transmission employees join us in our downtown location,” said Chris Beam, company president and chief operating officer. “The major remodeling and the new parking construction re-emphasize our company’s commitment to Roanoke and southwestern Virginia.”

The new parking structure will be built on Appalachian Power property across 1st Street from the Appalachian building main entrance. The property is already being used as surface parking for current employees.

About 260 parking spaces for the additional employees will be available in the new 90,000-square foot facility. The company will install charging stations for electric-powered vehicles in 20 spaces.

The new building is being built by Branch Associates and was designed by Balzer & Associates, both of Roanoke.

The office building remodeling and new parking construction will cost about \$13 million and is expected to be complete by spring 2019. It will be a phased process so that it can be done with minimal disruption to Appalachian employees currently in the building. During the remodeling, some of the transmission employees are being housed in leased downtown office space.

Appalachian Power has 1 million customers in Virginia, West Virginia and Tennessee (as AEP Appalachian Power). It is a unit of American Electric Power, one of the largest electric utilities in the United States, delivering electricity and custom energy solutions to nearly 5.4 million customers in 11 states. AEP owns the nation’s largest electricity transmission system, a more than 40,000-mile network that includes more 765-kilovolt extra-high voltage transmission lines than all other U.S. transmission systems combined. AEP also operates 224,000 miles of distribution lines. AEP ranks among the nation’s largest generators of electricity, owning approximately 26,000 megawatts of generating capacity in the U.S. AEP supplies 3,200 megawatts of renewable energy to customers.



### IN THIS ISSUE

- 1/APPALACHIAN POWER BREAKS GROUND
- 2/ROANOKE ACCOLADE
- 3/FEATURED BIZ LINK/ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ARTS & CULTURE
- 4-5/SPOTLIGHT ON BUSINESS
- 6/RIDE SOLUTIONS UPDATE
- 7/VBR UPDATE
- 8/NEW DIRECTOR NAMED
- 9-10/RESEARCH IN ROANOKE
- 11/ROA AND AMTRAK UPDATES
- 12/ COLAB UPDATE
- 13/VT BUSINESS BITS
- 13-16/TRAINING AND EVENTS
- 17-18/DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

## Roanoke Named Top Market for Jobs by USA Today

Job seekers, you don't have to look any further than the Roanoke Region to find the perfect fit.

A report in USA Today notes that Roanoke is one of the best metro job markets in 2018. The ranking was produced by Zippia, a job search website, which used data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics to rank the top markets. Rankings are based on how much local wages rose, how much unemployment dipped, and the current jobless rate.

"These metro areas are home to growing, well-paying jobs," Chris Kolmar, Zippia's head of marketing, told USA Today.

Roanoke is in good company alongside Blacksburg VA, Charleston SC, and Florence SC as the only metros on the East Coast to make the list.

Roanoke came in at No. 10. Here's the data synopsis:

- Number of Employed: 152,640
- Jobless rate: 2.9%
- Annual mean wage: \$43,650

Recruiting talent to the region is something the Roanoke Regional Partnership is focusing on. As part of the Accelerate 2022 plan, the Partnership announced a creation of a dedicated talent attraction program that builds upon the region's livability and connects with local college students.

Want to stay in touch and learn more about the region's talent hub? Contact Erin Burcham at [www.roanoke.org](http://www.roanoke.org).





Since starting our talent program, the Roanoke Regional Partnership has received many requests for a guide that employers can use to complement their employment package and recruit top talent.

What would you like to see in such a guide?

[TAKE THE SURVEY](https://www.jotform.com/RoanokeRegionVA/recruitment-guide-survey)

### Featured BizLink

<https://www.jotform.com/RoanokeRegionVA/recruitment-guide-survey>

The Roanoke Regional Partnership is working on a recruitment guide for employers and need their input for the content. Check out this Featured BizLink above to learn more and share your invaluable input!

## New Economic Analysis of the Arts and Cultural Industry in the City of Roanoke Released

Wayne Strickland, Executive Director of the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission (RVARC) presented the results of this study to Roanoke City Council on June 4 at their morning session. The study was requested by the City of Roanoke as part of the RVARC's FY 2018 work plan.

Sixteen organizations which provide programming to citizens of the Roanoke Valley participated in the study based on FY 2016 data. The last study was conducted in 2013. Strickland presented the following notable statistics:

- The Arts and Cultural sector supports over 200 full-time and part-time jobs.
- The Arts and Cultural Industry helps generate \$35.8 million in sales activity in the region because of new dollars attracted through visitation/tourism.
- While typically not the sole destination or attraction, arts and cultural organizations play a very significant role in supporting tourism in the region.
- The size and impact of the local industry sector based on the expenditures of arts and cultural organizations is \$40.7 million.
- Revenues increased by about \$7 million since the last survey in 2013. A significant part of that was an endowment increase of \$3.5 million but ticket sales and individual donations were also up.
- They reported 2,228 volunteers giving a total of 67,000 hours in 2016

Strickland noted that, "Over the years arts and cultural organizations have had a fairly significant economic impact on the economy of the Roanoke Valley. Although this study looked specifically at dollars spent by the local arts and cultural organizations and through visitor spending, we know that there are intangible impacts associated with a healthy arts and cultural scene, such as providing opportunities for students to participate in performing and visual arts activities and creating a strong positive perception of the Roanoke Valley by visitors and businesses."

Mayor Lea also stressed the importance of the arts and cultural industry to the region by saying, "City Council understands that these organizations not only draw tourists and serve our citizens but they are an important contributor to the education of our children. Multiple studies show how studying the arts increases critical thinking skills, discourages delinquency and leads to higher achievement across all disciplines."

For more information contact Wayne Strickland, Executive Director, Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission at 540.343.4417 or [wstrickland@rvarc.org](mailto:wstrickland@rvarc.org) or Susan Jennings, Arts and Culture Coordinator, City of Roanoke at 540-853-5652 or [susan.jennings@roanokeva.gov](mailto:susan.jennings@roanokeva.gov).

## Spotlight on Business ~

### Roanoke Mountain Adventures



Roanoke Mountain Adventures located at 806 Wasena Avenue opened its' doors in April 2015 with a mission to promote the region's outdoor opportunities and make them accessible to visitors and locals alike. Since then the company has outfitted thousands of people and helped them enjoy all our outdoor scene has to offer. Roanoke Mountain Adventures specializes in mountain biking, stand up paddleboarding (SUP) and kayaking, offering rentals, shuttles, guided and instructional trips for each activity. Their shop is located right along the Roanoke River and Greenway, offering easy access to water activities, the greenway, road and mountain biking.

#### **Services & Offerings:**

- Mountain, Road and Hybrid Bike rentals
- Kayak, Paddleboard (SUP) and Tube rentals
- Fully guided mountain bike trips
- Instructional classes for mountain biking and SUP
- Shuttles for water trips and biking
- Group and Corporate custom trips

In addition to being an outdoor outfitter, RMA also operates the Outdoor Gear Consignment Shop at their location, selling new and used outdoor gear, clothing and accessories on a consignment basis. They strive to provide affordable, environmentally responsible, local shopping options for those looking for outdoor gear and clothing. The consignment model keeps items in circulation and out of landfills, allows people to find quality gear at a great price and provides sellers an easy way to sell and recycle the gear they no longer use, all while supporting local business. Sellers receive 62% of the sell price and can bring their items by during normal business hours.

#### **Items We Accept:**

- Bikes
- Kayaks, Canoes and Paddleboards
- Outdoor Clothing and Outerwear
- Backpacks
- Camping and Backpacking Gear
- Footwear
- Hunting and Fishing Gear
- Skis and Snowboards

RMA's staff is highly experienced in outdoor recreation and customer service and has a passion for helping people enjoy the outdoors in a fun and safe manner. All guides and instructors are certified in their respective fields. Whether you are renting equipment, buying consignment gear or just looking for information, they are happy to answer any of your questions and help provide you with the latest conditions and intel. For those new to the area or new to outdoor recreation, stop by the shop to see how they can get you pointed in the right direction of an outdoor activity that fits your needs and abilities!

What customers are saying about RMA...

[https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction\\_Review-g58134-d7794173-Reviews-Roanoke\\_Mountain\\_Adventures-Roanoke\\_Virginia.html](https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g58134-d7794173-Reviews-Roanoke_Mountain_Adventures-Roanoke_Virginia.html)

## Spotlight on Business ~

### Roanoke Mountain Adventures - *continued from Page 4*

#### *Mountain Biking Blast- Old Dudes Rock It!*

Two retired military friends rendezvous for a weekend adventure on state of the art mountain bikes as first time visitors to Roanoke. Pre-planning phone conversations with James provided excellent mountain hiking recommendations for a solo hike then a guided mountain bike reservation with his company. Being our first experience on mountain bikes, Dan was absolutely outstanding as our guide. He geared the trail rides so these two military guys were challenged but not put onto trails beyond our experience level. The friendly professional customer service experience combined with the great bike trails at Carvins Cove made it a memorable day. We couldn't stop talking about our experience afterwards. Roanoke Mountain Adventures-- if you want to try mountain biking reserve a four hour guided trail ride- it was a blast.

#### *Mother/daughter mountain biking and hiking road trip*

My daughter and i were on a road trip along the Blue Ridge Pkwy and mt biking was one of our priorities. My research brought me to Roanoke Mt Adventures, James was so prompt in his response and within a day we had our guided tour of Carvin's Cove arranged. Our guide Dan was fantastic! He was great at adapting our ride to my daughter's skills and my slightly slower pace. The trails were great and Dan knew just where it take us. After 3 hours we were totally satisfied. Thank you James and Dan for a memorable ride.

#### *Great place to rent bicycles!*

We rented three bicycles and took the half day ride on the Greenway which is right near the store. The guys in the place were very helpful and the bicycles were well maintained and had comfortable seats! We took time to look around as they have a great selection of outdoor gear and clothing for sale on consignment. Highly recommend!

#### *Couldn't ask for More*

If you are looking into trying mountain biking for the first time out here, come visit Jim here at Mountain Adventures. I have never ridden mountain bikes on trails and Jim helped me out all along the way. He made sure I received the best bike in the shop, set me up with a backpack free of charge, repair items for an emergency, and recommended a great option for riding. I would have been completely lost if Jim would not have been there to help out. Oh and also, restaurant right next to the rental shop is delicious if you are looking for some great food after or before your ride.

#### *A wonderful intro to paddle boarding*

We just spent a wonderful afternoon on the river learning to paddle board with James. His tutorial before launching allowed us both to stand up on the boards on this first try!!

#### *A wonderful tubing experience*

Dan and James were very personable, friendly, knowledgeable (certified instructors for many outdoor activities) and helpful. A thoroughly enjoyable afternoon on the water. After our relaxing float, we had a delicious meal at the restaurant next door, Wasena City Tap Room and Grill. Highly

recommend Roanoke Mountain Adventures for your outdoor fun while in Roanoke. They also have a consignment shop and my friend bought a kayak the same day we visited. James and Dan helped secure the kayak to our vehicle.

#### *Family kayaking adventure*

We visited RMA last Sunday and went kayaking. It was great! Jim was super helpful, knowledgeable and friendly. We went there with our 3 daughters pre-teen to teen aged and everyone had a great time!

To learn more about Roanoke Mountain Adventures, contact 540-525-8295, visit [www.roanokemountainadventures.com](http://www.roanokemountainadventures.com) or stop by!



## How to Start a Carpool



It may not look like it, but every day our streets are filled with a tremendous mass transit opportunity. Look at any car commuting on I-81 into Roanoke, or check out the vehicle next to you while you're crawling onto 220 north in Clearbrook one morning, and you'll see it. In fact, there is a good chance all you have to do is look in your own rearview mirror and you're likely to see a way to move more people through the same number of lanes at twice the speed, all while cutting your commute costs by half or more: empty seats in every car.

Sure, commuting alone is unavoidable for many people, for many reasons. But for most folks, filling an empty seat is easy and has immediate financial benefits.

As employers, you play a major role in helping your employees connect to other commuters through carpooling. But how to get started?

RIDE Solutions has some easy recommendations to get you going:

- **Start at Work:** Ideal carpool partners are those who already work in the same building, so start there. Provide an employee message board in a common area like a lunch room or printer room where folks can post both rideshare needs and offers. If your company uses an intranet, consider creating an online forum where employees can make requests.
- **Implement Incentives:** Incentives don't have to be complicated, or even cost you money. Something as simple as reserved parking spaces for carpoolers can be highly sought after, particularly at worksites where parking is limited, or employees are paying for parking. In addition, transportation fringe benefits through the IRS can help employees cover the cost of transit with pre-tax dollars, with the option of a full or partial employer subsidy.
- **Register with RIDE Solutions:** Our Workplace Partnership program makes it easy to start carpooling. Employees simply register online at [www.ridesolutions.org](http://www.ridesolutions.org) and RIDE Solutions can do the rest. Employees have complete control of how their information is shared by choosing to match only with coworkers or the public, and RIDE Solutions never provides their information to a third party. Once their request is made, they'll receive a match list of other commuters matching their route and schedule, along with the contact information they've provided. And if they don't have a match, we keep searching with every new member until we find someone, and we'll let them know right away when they have a new match.

Carpooling is more than a way to save gas money – it can extend the life of your employees' vehicles and even cut their maintenance costs and insurance rates. Switching vehicles from week to week with other carpool members can cut the annual mileage on their vehicle. Fewer miles on the engine mean a longer life for the car, and many insurance companies offer discounted rates if a vehicle's annual mileage is 12,000 or lower.

For more information on getting started in a carpool, growing an existing carpool, or managing carpool partners, visit [www.ridesolutions.org](http://www.ridesolutions.org).



## USTA Hosts Mid-Atlantic Regionals in City of Roanoke

Virginia's Blue Ridge (VBR) Sports initiative is paying off with groups like the United States Tennis Association (USTA) hosting a Mid-Atlantic Regional Championship last month in Roanoke. The tournament brought nearly 400 tennis players and visitors to the region with play taking place on the newly renamed Carnis Poindexter Tennis Courts (River's Edge). The success of this event is due to a collaborative partnership between the USTA Mid-Atlantic, VBR Sports, the Roanoke Valley Tennis Association and Roanoke City Parks and Recreation.

The USTA Mid-Atlantic Championship is tentatively planned to return later this year and again next summer. This championship has opened up other opportunities for tennis events in Virginia's Blue Ridge ultimately creating more overnight hotel bookings and a greater economic impact. The mission of Virginia's Blue Ridge Sports is to enhance the quality of life and economy of Virginia's Blue Ridge by being the leader in promoting and hosting youth, amateur, collegiate and professional sporting events.

We are fortunate to live in a region that shares passion and community pride from volunteers, participants, and fans. Virginia's Blue Ridge is the perfect place to host your next sporting event. To learn more visit [VBRSports.com](http://VBRSports.com).



## Roanoke Regional Small Business Development Center Names New Director



Keith Hartman

Keith Hartman has joined the Roanoke Regional Small Business Development Center (RRSBDC) as its Director. In his role, Hartman counsels new and existing small businesses, offers training to small business owners and develops long-term relationships with local funding partners for the RRSBDC, working closely with the agency's stakeholders and community leaders in fulfilling the mission of the agency.

A Juniata College graduate with a degree in public administration, Hartman was most recently a regional executive for Vistage Worldwide, where his responsibilities included business development, member services, facilitator coaching, community relations and enhancing market visibility. Hartman is an accomplished leader with more than 30 years of entrepreneurial and corporate experience in business development, sales management and general management.

"I believe that small businesses are more than just the backbone of our regional economies," says Hartman. "They are the core of our communities as well."

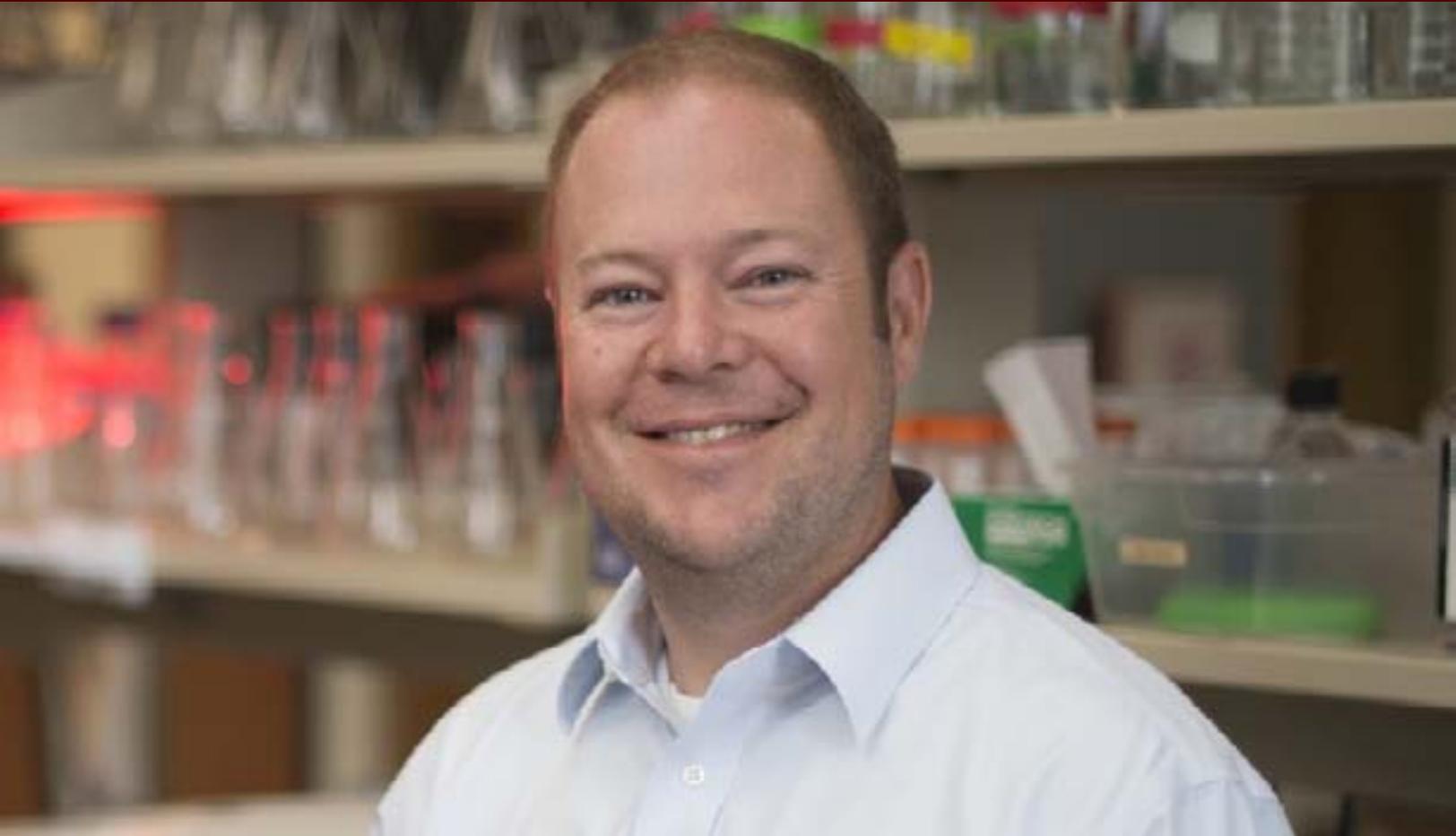
"Keith's knowledge, collaborative style, expertise and ability to build key relationships make him an ideal fit for the Roanoke Regional Small Business Development Center," says Roanoke Regional Chamber President/CEO Joyce Waugh. "Keith truly shares our passion and commitment to helping small businesses grow and prosper."

The RRSBDC was established in 1990 and is a joint program of the Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Virginia SBDC Network and the Small Business Administration.

The mission of the RRSBDC is to promote small business creation, growth and development by providing professional business counseling at no charge to the client. The RRSBDC also provides affordable training and informational resources. The RRSBDC proudly serves the small businesses of: Alleghany County, Botetourt County, Floyd County, Franklin County, Giles County, Montgomery County, Pulaski County, Radford City, Roanoke City, Roanoke County and Salem City. For more information, go to [RoanokeSmallBusiness.org](http://RoanokeSmallBusiness.org).

## Research in Roanoke ~

VTCRI scientist awarded \$2 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to study the body's immune memory response



*Kenneth Oestreich*

*Photo: David Hungate*

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health, has awarded a \$2 million, five-year grant to Ken Oestreich, an assistant professor at the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute, to study immunological memory.

The human immune system can “remember” invading pathogens, such as viruses, and can recognize intruders from previous infections and respond more quickly and robustly.

“We want to know how memory cells form as part of the immune response,” said Oestreich, who also serves as an assistant professor in both the Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology at the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine and the Department of Internal Medicine at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine. “Understanding the ways in which these cells form is critical for the design of more effective vaccines, as well as new therapies that capitalize on the body’s natural defense system.”

In response to infection by intracellular pathogens, such as influenza, the immune system triggers a boost in the number of specialized immune cells available to fight infection. Called effector T cells, these soldiers differentiate into two classes to battle influenza: T helper 1 (Th1) and T follicular helper (Tfh) cells.

These two effector cell types perform distinct duties as part of an immune response. Th1 cells help coordinate the responses of other immune cells at the site of infection, while Tfh cells help other cells make antibodies specifically designed to eliminate the pathogen. Oestreich and his team previously discovered that, despite their different functions, these T cell populations may be developmentally linked.

*continued on Page 10*

## Research in Roanoke ~ *continued from Page 9*

As the immune system eliminates the infection, the large population of defending cells is no longer needed, and their numbers wane. However, a small number of cells are left behind. These cells transition from actively fighting to a passive state.

“These new memory T cells are waiting, poised to react should a challenge arise again,” Oestreich said.

This means that if the body sees the same pathogen during a future infection, the memory effector T cells bounce back into action, wiping out the disease so efficiently that the host often doesn’t even develop symptoms.

It’s unclear, though, whether memory cells arise directly from the fighting effector T cells, or whether they form as a separate set of cells during infection. It was previously thought that they use the same battle plan as before, where memory Th1 cells fight at the site of infection, while memory Tfh cells work with other cells to produce antibodies needed to defeat the invader.

“We’re questioning that now,” Oestreich said. “We have good preliminary evidence suggesting that Th1 cells can give rise to Tfh cells, and that they may transform into memory T cell populations.”

That’s an important distinction, Oestreich said — it would mean that these cell types aren’t as dissimilar as previously thought.

“We’re investigating whether Th1 cells can give rise to memory cells,” Oestreich said. “This would mean that memory populations can come directly from effector cells, allowing them to switch roles as needed during the course of an immune response.”

Ultimately, this means that the immune system may not fight with separately-trained soldiers, but, rather, the soldiers change roles as the environment changes.

“This allows the cells to respond and perform different functions as soon as they are needed,” Oestreich said.

The research grant from the NIH allows Oestreich to study exactly how the molecular environment affects effector and memory T cell status and function. Oestreich and his team will use both cells cultured in his laboratory and infection models, such as influenza. By understanding the regulatory pathways of memory cell transitions, scientists may be able to develop increasingly effective vaccines as well as innovate novel immunotherapeutic strategies, according to Oestreich.

Oestreich’s research team includes Kaitlin Read, a research specialist and laboratory coordinator, as well as Michael Powell and Bharath Sreekumar, both of whom are doctoral students in Virginia Tech’s Translational Biology, Medicine, and Health graduate program.

Other contributors include Coy Allen, an assistant professor in the Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology at the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine who studies inflammatory diseases; David Xie, an associate professor at the Biocomplexity Institute of Virginia Tech and in the Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology in the College of Veterinary Medicine, where he studies epigenomics and computational biology; and Andre Ballesteros-Tato, an assistant professor of medicine at the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Medicine.

Contact: Ashley WengersHerron - VTCRI



## Passenger Traffic Continues to Grow at ROA

*May traffic was up 13.9% year over year at the Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport as 2018 continues trend of strong traffic growth.*



The Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport continues to see 2018 traffic increase with May traffic up 13.9% on a year over year basis. May 2018 saw 61,261 passengers fly via ROA compared to 53,772 in May of 2017, an increase of 7,489 passengers.

Strong community support and improved airline operational reliability have all played roles in the continuation of sustained passenger growth, which began in September of 2016. May 2018 saw 13.9% passenger growth over May 2017. The last time monthly year over year growth was larger than last month was January 2007 driven by the arrival of Allegiant Air in Roanoke. Year-to-date 2018 traffic is up 7.5% versus 2017. May 2018 was busier than October 2017 with October typically being the busiest month at ROA. At this pace, the Roanoke Blacksburg Regional Airport is on track to have its busiest year since 2011.

“We are pleased to see this positive trend continue into 2018, especially given our strong traffic numbers in 2016 and 2017,” stated Timothy T. Bradshaw, A.A.E., executive director of the Roanoke Regional Airport Commission. “Passenger demand is a critical factor when speaking with airlines regarding improving and increasing air service to our region. Our customers are using our existing air service and the carriers have taken note. We appreciate the support of our community choosing to fly ROA.”

The Airport Commission continually works with the airlines to improve reliability, reduce air fare and upgrade equipment serving the Roanoke Region. This has played a significant role in the increase of passengers using the airport. In addition, the Airport Commission has invested resources to promote the services available at ROA.

The Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport is the primary airport for Virginia’s Blue Ridge and the New River Valley. ROA serves over 616,000 passengers per year via 4 airlines (American Airlines, Delta Airlines, United Airlines, and Allegiant Air) with nonstop service to 6 (Atlanta, Charlotte, Chicago, New York LaGuardia, Philadelphia, and Washington Dulles) hub cities as well as weekly flights to Orlando Sanford International Airport and St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport. To learn more, please visit [www.flyroa.com](http://www.flyroa.com).



## Corporate culture and policy caters to veterans

Amtrak received recognition for its commitment to providing opportunities for America’s veterans with its inclusion in the Top 100 Best for Vets Employers by Military Times.

The annual ranking highlights a corporate culture and policies that best leverage the traits and skills embodied by veterans and servicemen and women to enable them to be successful in civilian roles. Military Times invites companies to fill out its nearly 100-question survey, tests to ensure the accuracy of responses, carefully evaluates survey data and includes only the best companies in its published rankings.

Approximately one in five Amtrak employees self-identify as veterans or active members of the U.S. Armed Forces, National Guard and Reserves. Amtrak remains focused on hiring veterans because of the valuable experiences and leadership skills they bring to America’s Railroad®.

A wide range of rewards support the professional and personal lives of Amtrak employees. Vacation and holiday time off, 401K and retirement plans and education assistance are among the many available benefits. Another benefit is the Amtrak for Veterans employee affinity group, which supports current and former military members through fellowship, mentoring and community outreach.

About 20,000 Amtrak employees provide customers a hassle-free experience on trains with wide seats, outlets and plenty of room to move around. Employees ensure customers travel in comfort and reach their destinations safely and reliably.

The Military Times recognition is one of several awards citing Amtrak as a great place for a career. Other recent recognitions include Forbes magazine’s America’s Best Employers 2018 list and U.S. Veterans Magazine Best of the Best Top Veteran-Friendly Companies.

To learn more about Amtrak, visit [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com).



## Introducing CityWorks (X)po VIII: Anticipating 2050, Acting Today

We live in a world with big questions. These big questions require big answers. As if that wasn't hard enough, the questions we face are changing at a tremendous rate. It is hard to even identify the problems before they have been replaced by something new.

This makes it incredibly hard to build effective solutions. How many times have we seen outdated ideas and programs presented as solutions to modern problems? It is clear we have not solved homelessness and income inequality. So, what is it going to take?

Something more...

With this in mind, we are very pleased to announce CityWorks (X)po VIII: Anticipating 2050, Acting Today. CityWorks has always sought the big ideas required to solve big problems. We are now taking that approach and looking into the future and posing the question...

What do we need to do today to prepare for the challenges we will face in 2050?

We are encouraging all our speakers to think about what the world will look like in 32 short years. What will be the major transportation and housing issues? How will income inequality and racial inequities have impacted our societies? What role will technology play in our communities?

It is our belief that thinking this far ahead is necessary. If we focus solely on building solutions to today's problems, we likely will not solve them until something new has already made itself clear. Instead, we are challenging our speakers and audience to embrace a mindset focused on tackling present and future challenges together. With this approach, we will hopefully be better prepared when new problems inevitably bubble up.

However, this is not a thought experiment. CityWorks has always been action oriented. We aim to maintain this focus by pushing everyone to follow their thoughts about the future with immediate actions communities can undertake to prepare themselves for an uncertain future. Are their policies or organizational ideas beneficial to implement now? What tools can we start crafting now?

While there is no doubt, what we think now will likely change drastically in the coming years. The capacity to think creatively and look into the future will always be useful. Building new tools and fostering innovative ideas is a necessary part of crafting solutions. So the process we are putting together of mixing future thinking and immediate action is a template we hope to see grow in Roanoke and beyond.

While CityWorks (X)po will always focus on "Big Ideas for Better Places", this year the three day conference will address "Anticipating 2050, Acting Today".

This year's event will be held October 4-6 at CoLab and tickets will be on sale soon. Check out our social media and website at <http://www.colabroanoke.com> to stay up to date and purchase tickets.

For more information, contact Brad Stephens, Director of Roanoke CoLab at [brad@colabroanoke.com](mailto:brad@colabroanoke.com) by email or 540.524.2702 by telephone. Stop by the Roanoke CoLab at 1327 Grandin Road, Roanoke, VA 24015.



## ~Business Bits

### Rethinking the Suggestion Box

Employee suggestion boxes have been a staple in the workplace for years. Sure, you can place an idea in there, but who reads it? Who acts upon it? Who gets the credit for it? The desire to voice an opinion about the work being done ranks high on employee surveys regarding workplace satisfaction. Maybe it's time to consider reimagining the "suggestion box". Here are a couple, well, suggestions.

**Idea Boards:** Idea boards are a low tech, visual way to allow employees to asynchronously 'discuss' ideas. The employee first posts his or her idea and its cost to the idea board located in a prominent spot. If another employee likes the idea, they place a sticker on the idea paper. The goal is to gather 12 "likes". If the idea does not gather 12 "likes", it is placed in the parking lot section of the idea board indicating there is just not enough support behind the idea at this time. If 12 "likes" are posted, the employee can submit a one page proposal regarding the idea to the leadership team. If approved, the idea goes to the next space on the idea board called "ideas in motion". Once the idea is implemented, it rests at the final spot on the board called "it's happening". Features of this method are that it is low tech, simple, fast, transparent, and has historical information.



**Virtual Suggestion Boxes:** If anonymous feedback is solicited at your place of business in order for leadership to be aware of issues and be able to address them, a virtual suggestion box might be a wonderful solution. There are several free and fee-based versions to explore such as Suggestion Ox ([suggestionox.com](http://suggestionox.com)), Free Suggestion Box ([freesuggestionbox.com](http://freesuggestionbox.com)) and Vetter Box ([getvetter.com](http://getvetter.com)). Just remember that someone needs to be in charge of sifting through suggestions, and employees won't receive a confirmation of their idea/suggestion. Leaders need to reference some of the suggestions or feedback submitted so employees understand that their ideas and concerns are being taken seriously.

While your idea of purchasing a 3D printer or having an Xbox party may not get implemented, you'll find that being able to share your thoughts in a meaningful way and knowing they are considered will go a long way toward employee satisfaction.

Business Bits is brought to you by Lesa Hanlin ([Lesa@vt.edu](mailto:Lesa@vt.edu)), Virginia Tech, Executive Director, Roanoke Regional Initiatives (540) 767-6100.



## TRAINING & EVENTS

### **Business Smart Start 2018**

Tuesday 4:00 to 7:00 PM ~ July 10, 2018

Roanoke Regional Small Business Development Center, Chamber of Commerce Building, 210 S. Jefferson Street, Roanoke, VA

Are you considering starting a new business? Not sure what you need to do and what steps to take? Then Start Your Business Smart!

Business Smart Start is an introduction to owning your own business. Topics covered include deciding on a legal entity structure, basic accounting and tax issues, steps you need to take for permits and licensing, steps to writing a business plan and basics of marketing and market research. We cover the nine steps to market research to determine if your business idea makes sense. Class is for individuals in business, or those thinking of starting a business even if it might be years in the future. The class is 3.0 hours long so these topics will only be briefly covered. Upon completing the class you will have the opportunity to schedule a one-on-one appointment with one of the professional business counselors in our office. We do not charge anything for our one-on-one sessions.

Pre-Registration is required at <https://clients.virginiasbdc.org/workshop.aspx?ekey=130380010>

Fee: \$ 20.00

Please make payment by credit card at the end of registration, sending in a check prior to class, or stopping by our office and paying by check. Credit card payments cannot be accepted over the phone. We do not give refunds, however if you miss class, you can attend another class.

Speaker: Tom Tanner

Phone: (540) 983-0717 x 103

Email: [sbdc@roanokechamber.org](mailto:sbdc@roanokechamber.org)

## TRAINING & EVENTS



### **Grow your Business Locally and Globally**

### **Tale of Two Markets: Export + Local**

### **A Multicultural Entrepreneurship Event**

If you are an entrepreneur or a business owner and looking to explore target markets for your business we invite you to attend a workshop that is designed to help you take that next step

Representative from IBT Online will discuss how VA companies can grow their sales, brand and business globally through website localization and international online marketing

Representative from Virginia SBSD will explain how to do business with State of Virginia

**There is NO COST to attend a workshop but registration is recommended**

#### Date

Tuesday, July 17th, 2018

#### Location

South County Library  
6303 Merriman Rd, Roanoke, VA 24018

#### Time

1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

To register email Ramain Gohar at VSBSD at [Ramain.gohar@sbsd.virginia.gov](mailto:Ramain.gohar@sbsd.virginia.gov)



## TRAINING & EVENTS

**FACTS &  
SNACKS**  
@ the Virginia Tech Roanoke Center

The Virginia Tech Roanoke Center offers a short session on a current topic that is open to the public. Join us for a light afternoon snack and dynamic discussion.

**07.26.18 | 3-4 P.M.**

## **MANAGING SAFETY ON YOUR WAY TO OSHA COMPLIANCE**

**VIRGINIA TECH ROANOKE CENTER  
108 N. JEFFERSON ST., SUITE 710  
ROANOKE, VA 24016**

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) provides safety guidelines for businesses. It is important for companies to adhere to these guidelines for the protection of their largest asset - their employees. We will discuss how to manage safety in the workplace as your company works toward OSHA compliance.

This event is at NO COST, but seating is limited. Email [mpfrankl@vt.edu](mailto:mpfrankl@vt.edu) to reserve your spot by 07.23.18. Free parking for the first 20 registrants!

**upcoming topic: August - Cybersecurity**

## TRAINING & EVENTS

2018



# VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE WORKSHOP

Join us for a **FREE Active Shooter Course**

The intensive course is designed to assist our business community in preventing, planning and responding to workplace violence and active shooter incidents.

**Thursday, August 23 | 8:00 am - 12:00 pm**  
**South County Library**  
**6303 Merriman Road, Roanoke, VA 24018**

This preparation segment focuses on preparing for a violent event and addresses key topics such as threat assessment, security planning, response procedures, working with law enforcement and Emergency Action Plan development.

The workshop is **FREE**, but **ADVANCED REGISTRATION** is required at:  
**[ViolenceWorkshop2018.Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/violence-workshop-2018)**

For more information contact:  
Jessica Fintel, Roanoke County Economic Development  
(540) 772-2069 or [JFintel@RoanokeCountyVA.gov](mailto:JFintel@RoanokeCountyVA.gov)

## Commercial Property for Sale \$299,000



Approximately 1.09 acres located on Blue Hills Drive are available for sale and commercial development. The parcel (Lot 6) is located at the entrance to The Roanoke Centre for Industry and Technology (RCIT), just off of Orange Avenue (north side of Route 460). This Roanoke City Tax Parcel #7160119 is zoned Commercial-General (conditional), is level and suitable for office or commercial use. Public utilities are available and the listing agent can provide information regarding the Blue Hills Concept Plan.

RCIT is one of Western Virginia's premiere industrial parks with approximately 2,500 employees. The 440-acre park was initially developed by the City of Roanoke in 1980, and was expanded in 1992. RCIT is adjacent to US Route 460 and offers quick access to Interstate 581 (approximately 3.4 miles), Interstate 81 (approximately 6.9 miles), less than 4 miles to the Norfolk Southern Bulk Transfer Terminal, and 8 miles to Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport.

RCIT will be home to the new Deschutes Brewery, and currently houses Advance Auto Parts Distribution Center, AT&T, Creative Kids School, Eaton, Elizabeth Arden, FedEx Ground, Heritage Point/Roanoke Natural Foods Co-op, InfoSeal, Orvis, SEMCO, Virginia Utility Protective Services/VA811, and Wholesome Harvest Baking.

For more information, contact:  
Thomas S. Turner Property Listings  
Senior Associate Broker  
Hall Associates, Inc.  
112 Kirk Avenue, S.W.  
Roanoke, VA 24011  
(540) 857-5858 or [tsturner@rev.net](mailto:tsturner@rev.net)

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## Check it Out! City Owned Available Property

The City of Roanoke has a variety of properties, from existing buildings to buildable sites presently available for acquisition. The purchase of City property must be approved by Council; this requires potential buyers to submit a proposal for the property. For more information on available properties and the proposal process, please visit the links below:

<http://www.bizroanoke.com/Start,-Locate,-Expand/Sites-and-Buildings/Available-Sites.aspx>

<http://www.bizroanoke.com/Start,-Locate,-Expand/Sites-and-Buildings/Available-Buildings.aspx>



## Development Opportunity

### Property for Sale Located at 2903 Peters Creek Road, NW

### \$1,695,000



The City of Roanoke (owner) is accepting proposals for the purchase of three adjoining parcels located at 2903 Peters Creek Road, NW; Tax Map Numbers 6410104, 6410105 and 6410106. The combined acreage is approximately 11.8 acres, a portion of which is zoned Commercial Large Site (conditional) and the remaining portion is zoned Commercial General.

Conveniently located just minutes from Interstates I-581/220, and I-81, the site offers bi-directional access to Peters Creek Road, NW. Current traffic count is approximately 18,000 vehicles per day.

For complete property details please follow the link to the City of Roanoke's GIS system and use the Search/Query function by entering the following parcel ID Tax Numbers: 6410104, 6410105 and 6410106.

GIS link: <http://gisre.roanokeva.gov/>

#### How to Propose:

Proposals for the property must contain the following elements and be accompanied by the required signature form available on the Economic Development website under Available Properties, "Peters Creek Road".

Proposals for the property must contain the following elements:

- Identification of the property and any adjacent property involved in your development
- Concept plan of the intended development including use, location and size of any buildings, number of units and a timeline for the completion of the project
- Description of the qualifications and experience of the proposer/developer
- Business Plan and Financial Plan for the project
- Offer amount for the property

Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated for compatibility to the City of Roanoke's Comprehensive Plan and Neighborhood Plan. The proposer will be contacted after sufficient time for staff review.

Please submit your written proposal to:

Rob Ledger, Manager, Department of Economic Development  
117 Church Avenue, SW Roanoke, VA 24011

Or submit by email to: [econdevl@roanokeva.gov](mailto:econdevl@roanokeva.gov)

For more information please contact the Department of Economic Development at 540-853-2715.