



# APPalachian Prosperity Project

*A Collaborative Model for Advancing Education, Health,  
& Economic Prosperity in Southwest Virginia*

*Annual Report  
FY2013*

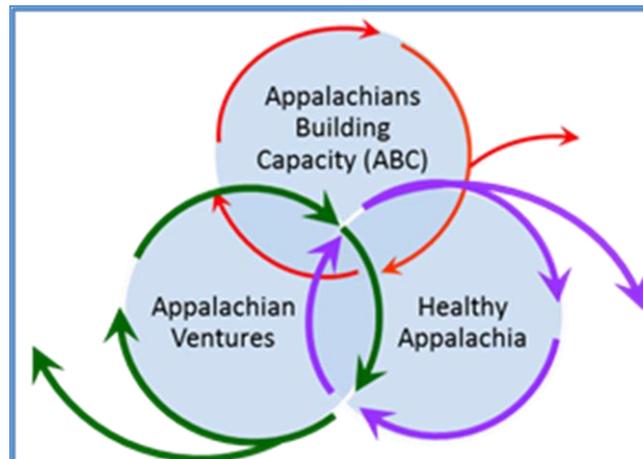


# Southwest Virginia Economic Development Partnership: *Appalachian Prosperity Project*

## UVa's Report to the Commonwealth, FY13

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The *Appalachian Prosperity Project* (APP) is a collaborative partnership among the University of Virginia (UVa), UVa's College at Wise (UVa-Wise), the Virginia Coalfield Coalition (comprised of Planning Districts 1 & 2), the private sector, and the Commonwealth. This partnership uses a systems approach to simultaneously advance the inextricably linked fields of education (*Appalachians Building Capacity*), health (*Healthy Appalachia Institute*), and prosperity (*Appalachian Ventures*).



*Appalachian Prosperity Project*

Whether APP is bringing world-class executive education to Coalfield business leaders, piloting an innovative early language literacy intervention, or providing a bridge for engineering education, this multi-faceted partnership produces results. The partnership is unique and powerful because it widely encompasses disparate stakeholders while remaining coordinated and focused. APP views issues from many perspectives by convening public, private, and government agencies that are not often at the same table. APP provides the infrastructure to transform those conversations into initiatives today while maintaining a long-term commitment to the overall mission.

This mutually beneficial alliance applies academic rigor to UVa's outreach projects, expands student experiences, encourages the exchange of ideas, and creates new knowledge which will inform future community- and university-based shared research and partner activities.

APP is an inspiring reflection of the spirit of the region's people, who value trust, self-determination, and perseverance. The vision is to ensure regional collaboration, generate new ideas, and establish a process to engage the social, economic, and scientific issues that exist at the interface of health, education, prosperity, and Appalachian culture. Our collective mission is to position the region in the global economy while honoring its traditions and culture, using local assets, engagement by all partners, and true collaboration. (Website: [www.APProject.org](http://www.APProject.org))

Leaders in the Coalfields are focused on transforming their historically extractive-based economy from one centered mainly on tobacco, coal, and timber to one built on information technology, education, health care, and energy. To attract companies, local leaders recognize that they must have an educated workforce, business acumen, and widespread access to medical care.

The *Appalachian Prosperity Project* builds on a formal commitment made in 2007 by UVa to the Commonwealth of Virginia to help stimulate economic development in Southwest Virginia. The initiative resides in UVa's Office of the President; however, UVa-Wise is a critical and influential local presence. It serves as a translator, bridging the geographic distance between partners and opening the door to relationships that would otherwise not exist. The Virginia Coalfield Coalition is leveraging the resources of APP to attain their regional economic development goals.

A unique aspect of this partnership is its foundation in a systems approach. This brings a diversity of organizations to the table to collectively solve problems. Virtually every school at the University is substantively involved, including Engineering, Architecture, Business, Education, Nursing, and Medicine. Scores of regional partners are engaged from the public and private sectors. Representatives from health, education, and business are involved in every initiative, since all play a role in tackling the intractable issues in Southwest Virginia.

The University's role is to listen to the needs of communities and their citizens, initiate conversations, support strategic planning, provide innovation and evidence-based research and evaluation, and collect and analyze data. The Coalfield community identifies challenges, infuses cultural understanding and history, sets the vision and strategic direction, and selects priorities. All partners are givers and receivers of knowledge; together they incubate ideas, generate resources, develop programs, lead, and execute projects. APP has three co-directors,

representing UVa, UVa-Wise, and the Virginia Coalfield Coalition. Decision-making is shared and each partner is fully consulted before any actions are taken.

Each of the interdigitated foci – education, health, and business – has a signature project that serves as a thematic guide for activities. In health, it is APP's *Healthy Appalachia Institute* (HAI), created to energize a regional public, private, and government coalition that addresses the region's health disparities. An example of successful shared decision-making is the creation of *A Blueprint for Health Improvement and Health-Enabled Prosperity* (<http://www.healthyappalachia.org/our-health-blueprint>), a community-developed, detailed roadmap for a healthier population, with specific goals and outcomes. A similar exercise was recently completed to create the *Blueprint for Entrepreneurial Growth and Economic Prosperity in Southwest Virginia* (<http://aproject.org/documents/ENT.%20Blueprint%20for%20the%20web.pdf>).

These blueprints demonstrate to external funders and supporters that there is a vision for the region and important early groundwork has been accomplished. Since completion in 2009, the health blueprint has helped the region secure funding, develop regional health statistic data to measure progress, initiate an annual research symposium, mandate insurance coverage for telemedicine, and expand the number of telemedicine sites within the region.

APP's *Appalachian Ventures* encompasses our initiatives to foster a robust economy. APP is offering management training through UVa's globally-ranked Darden business program, with faculty traveling to the region and working directly with managers from the private and public sector. Employers are able to build management capacity for their workforce, which is often promoted from within, and which has limited professional development opportunities available.

*Appalachian Ventures* convened over sixty community organizations, business interests, and environmental groups as part of the Clinch River Valley Initiative (<http://clinchriverva.com/>) and the larger regional cultural heritage efforts, including The Crooked Road, 'Round the Mountain and Heartwood, to leverage the natural assets in the area and spur related startups. Five action groups are currently working on issues such as connecting downtown revitalization efforts with the Clinch River, developing river access points and trails, and enhancing water quality.

APP's *Appalachians Building Capacity* (ABC) is building an educated workforce through innovative early language and literacy programs in the homes of infants and toddlers and through professional development for early childhood teachers. Faculty members create successful evidence-based intervention models and infants and toddlers gain skills that enable

them to enter kindergarten ready to learn to read. Head Start, Early Head Start, and elementary school teachers build from the same basic understanding, terminology, and evaluation structure, resulting in a seamless transition for the child from home to preschool to the early elementary grades.

## **FY13 HIGHLIGHTS**

### **FUNDING**

- UVa helped to secure \$1 million in new funding to bring programs and services to the residents of Southwest Virginia. Over the past four years the total is \$10.9 million. This includes funding for creating *UVa's Cancer Center Without Walls* to extend UVa Health System resources into the region, for downtown revitalization efforts in the Town of Appalachia, and advancing the Clinch River Valley Initiative to bring new economies to the region.

### **RECOGNITION**

- National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) awarded APP with the *NADO 2012 Innovation Award*. APP was honored at NADO's annual conference.
- "Blueprint for Entrepreneurial Growth and Economic Prosperity in Southwest Virginia," written by APP, was cited by the *Governor's Rural Jobs Council* as a model for rural entrepreneurship that should be replicated across the Commonwealth.
- Graduate students' community development work in the region was awarded *1<sup>st</sup> place in the 2013 Presidential Research Poster Competition* for "Building New Prosperity in the Coalfields."
- In May 2013 the Center for Telehealth at UVa was selected as the first member of *Cisco's new Healthcare Center of Excellence program*, in part for their innovative work and extensive health coverage in Southwest Virginia.

### **APP RESEARCH CENTER**

During FY13 APP created a research center under the leadership of Suzanne Moomaw, a faculty member in the School of Architecture. The center provides evidence-based research to Planning Districts 1 and 2 to guide community economic development strategy, inform priorities,

assess impact, and create a compelling asset-based narrative that helps attract new jobs to the region. The center's goals are to:

1. serve as an academic anchor that will encourage APP scholarly research;
2. establish clear guidelines for working in Southwest Virginia with community partners;
3. encourage projects that deliver immediate impact, align with principal goal of job creation.

The following are the center's accomplishments to date:

- Partnership with the town of Appalachia to improve its economic resilience through downtown revitalization, town visibility, and recreational opportunities. This includes trail design, website development, and train museum assessment.
- Partnership with the Town of Grundy to develop a new teen center. The teen center will be designed by a team of faculty and students and will serve as a positive resource for area youth.
- Launch of exploratory group (UVa, UVa-Wise, and SW Virginia Technology Council) on the application of 3-D printing technology within businesses and educational institutions in the region.
- First joint university and regional symposium on Appalachian Prosperity held at UVa on April 5, 2013 with 70 faculty, students, and community partners attending. Each of UVa's 11 schools was represented at the symposium.
- Creation of APP Post-Graduate Fellows program to provide intensive work in the region in a multi-disciplinary way. First class of fellows includes: architects, landscape architects, historians, and planners led by Landscape Architecture chair.
- Development of venture grant program for faculty and students: awarded seven grants in the academic year for research and practice in education, economic development, and health.

- Initiated data collection and database development on demographic, economic, and quality of life data on the Coalfield counties and Norton.

## HEALTH

- To address the unique challenges faced by cancer patients in rural areas, communities and organizations throughout Appalachia and Southwest Virginia are partnering with the University of Virginia Cancer Center to advance a virtual hospital — ***The Cancer Center Without Walls***. This effort is designed to better provide patients with advanced cancer care and clinical trials close to home.

Funding for the center comes from an 18-month, \$965,000 grant awarded by the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission. Funding began Jan. 1, 2013.

Because of the rural nature of Virginia's tobacco regions, many citizens do not have access to clinical trials and specialists available at NCI-designated cancer centers, such as UVa Cancer Center. In this effort, the virtual cancer center takes full advantage of the extensive broadband network in Southwest Virginia to expand telemedicine initiatives and increase access. While the region has excellent cancer physicians and centers, this partnership with UVa facilitates two key objectives:

- **Increase access to advanced care and clinical research:** UVa is collaborating with local healthcare providers, health systems and organizations to increase the number of patients with access to screening, education, and advanced cancer care (including genetic evaluation).

One example: UVa will collaborate with local health systems to expand telemedicine opportunities for breast and cervical cancer screenings.

“By expanding the use of mobile digital mammography and video-colonoscopy in these communities, we are able to better understand how we can bring screening and prevention options where cancer is prevalent and screening options are limited,” says Michael J. Weber, PhD, Director of the UVa Cancer Center.

- **Bring advanced cancer care and clinical research close to home:** UVa is working with the region's medical centers to train healthcare providers and develop a structure that improves access to advanced care and clinical trials.

"We have a long history with the communities and people of Southwest Virginia and are delighted to help build together this virtual network. By bringing clinical trials to residents locally, we can provide more options for patients so they don't have to travel as often to Charlottesville. Our goal is to develop a community-based clinical research team to work locally with providers to ensure patients can access the most advanced treatments," notes Michael J. Weber, Director of the UVa Cancer Center.

"Fragmented cancer care is not good cancer care," Weber adds. "The Cancer Center Without Walls is designed to help create a seamless network for care so that everyone across the Commonwealth from the Coalfields to the Atlantic has access to the very finest resources. We are proud to be part of this effort."

- A National Cancer Institute study identified five geographical clusters in the United States with elevated levels of cervical cancer morbidity and mortality; one cluster is in far Southwest Virginia. The UVa Health System, the Healthy Appalachia Institute, and the Virginia Department of Health have continued their partnership championing cervical cancer screenings in the region. A newly created video-colposcopy program has already provided over 150 women with a telemedicine connection to specialty care. It has also resulted in colposcopy training for five nurse practitioners in the area, increasing the number of local health care providers qualified to perform this procedure by a factor of five. Plans are underway to expand the video-colposcopy pilot to three more sites as an avenue to developing a robust, nurse practitioner-guided network throughout Southwest Virginia.
- In addition to cervical cancer screening, UVa continues to be active in helping to reduce mortality from breast cancer by providing over 700 mammograms to women in Southwest Virginia over the last four years. UVa's mobile mammography van is able to serve women even in the most remote areas of the Coalfields which have extremely limited access to specialty care.

- The University of Virginia Office of Telemedicine continues to provide specialty clinical services and health education throughout Southwest Virginia using an extensive network of telemedicine sites. There are now more than 25 active telemedicine sites in the region, with a substantial growth in providing child and family psychiatric resources. With support from the Tobacco Commission UVa updated the aging technology at three sites to establish what is emerging as a state-of-the-art high definition network. In addition, two new clinics were offered in Southwest Virginia in FY13 – one for cystic fibrosis and one for ostomy patients.
- In 2009, the Blueprint for Health Improvement and Health-Enabled Prosperity, developed in partnership with the Southwest Virginia Health Authority, outlined 20 goals plus objectives, with timeframes divided into three timeline categories: Near (0-2 years), Intermediate (3-9 years), and Long-term (10+ years). The Blueprint also outlined strategic goal categories (e.g., overall health, health-related economic developments, etc.) and organizational goal categories, including development funding, advocacy and operations. The Blueprint has galvanized the region into action, increasing awareness and progress toward improving population health.

The Blueprint is guiding the efforts of many public and private entities, including the Healthy Appalachia Institute. HAI developed and published a Progress Report 2011 (<http://www.healthyappalachia.org/our-health-blueprint>) outlining the many ongoing success stories.

- One of the critical elements of the strategic blueprint is to expand fitness and outdoor recreation in the region. In partnership with over 20 regional health, cultural, natural resource, environmental, and planning organizations, APP is leading the development of the ***Health is Right Outside*** outdoor recreation plan that will encourage residents and organizations to leverage the region's natural assets to adopt healthier lifestyles. The national initiative, *County Health Rankings & Roadmaps*, is supporting the plan's development.
- **Substance abuse** in Central Appalachia has resulted in a mounting death rate from the unintentional, fatal overdose of prescription drugs, an escalating number of children in foster care, and an increasing level of drug-related crime. UVa worked in partnership

with the region under the leadership of One Care of Southwest Virginia, Inc., to construct a coordinated approach to end substance abuse and misuse. The *Blueprint for Substance Abuse and Misuse: Prevention, Treatment and Control* addresses the tidal wave of substance abuse in the region. Based on this work, APP was asked to provide analysis and recommendations for the Prescription Drug Abuse Summit, convened November 2012 by the U.S. Attorney's Office. APP also drafted the final Summit report. [http://www.justice.gov/usao/vaw/presc\\_drug\\_summit/summit%20report\\_final20130417.pdf](http://www.justice.gov/usao/vaw/presc_drug_summit/summit%20report_final20130417.pdf)

- Over the last six years the Healthy Appalachia Institute Fellowship program has mentored 32 students who have a strong interest in solving health care challenges in the region. More than 80% of the students are now in medical school, graduate nursing education, or are practicing health care professionals. Several are still completing their undergraduate education.

## EDUCATION

### CENTER FOR THE LIBERAL ARTS

- UVa, UVa's College at Wise, and the Southwest Virginia Public Education Consortium (SVPEC, comprised of 16 school systems) continue to work together to improve knowledge of traditional American history on the part of the region's teachers and children. This year saw the completion of one federal Teaching American History grant, continuing work under the auspices of another, and a joint proposal by UVa and SVPEC to extend such work in the region in other subject area. Brief descriptions of these projects follow:

*"American Crises"*: This grant's work will culminate in June 2013 by issuing "History Specialists" certificates to 20 participants. These teachers will have acquired knowledge and skills necessary to become powerful resources for the dissemination of historical knowledge and tools among teachers in the region. The program has been approved as a certificate program for graduate credit offered through the School of Continuing and Professional Studies.

*"My History Partner"*: This grant's final year will have generated powerful data on two fronts: improved teacher performance resulting from ongoing analysis of tapes of their teaching, and initial use of a new observational instrument, "PATH" (Protocol for

Assessing the Teaching of History), which captures teachers' success at conveying accurate historical knowledge to their pupils.

- I3 proposal: A pre-application for federal funding under this program was submitted by SVPEC in partnership with UVa this spring. It would extend work under the "My History Partner" in English, history, math, and science.
- Total FY13 expenditures in the region from the two existing grants were \$351,791.08; the new grant proposal is for \$2.4 million. Participating entities in addition to Center for the Liberal Arts and SVPEC include UVa's Miller Center for Public Affairs, Corcoran Department of History, School of Engineering, Curry School of Education, School of Continuing and Professional Studies (SCPS), and the Center for the Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning. Two jointly prepared proposals to the Commonwealth's Math Science Partnerships program and a large federal proposal initiated by SCPS in partnership with CLA were rejected but will be used towards future proposals.
- Fifty-five history teachers from the Southwest Virginia region participated in workshops, credit courses, and research in FY13, including 18 teachers from the Coalfield region.
- The University of Virginia's School of Continuing and Professional Studies operates an academic center at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center and provides services in the region.
  - 100% of the counties in the Southwest were represented by educators who participated in UVa-designed and sponsored professional development courses and conferences offered through the center in FY13. The offerings were in the areas of education, engineering, non-profit management, and school leadership. In FY13 38% of all SCPS Southwest activity (credit and noncredit) was from the Coalfield region.
  - UVa's School of Continuing and Professional Studies partnered with the Region VII Gifted Consortium in sponsoring the *Speaking for the Gifted* Conference in June 2013. In 2012, this free event was offered to 250 gifted education teachers in the Southwest Virginia area; 90 participants attended from the Coalfield region. It is expected the participant numbers will be the same in 2013.

- Key educational personnel from the area also attended SCPS's *Leading from the Central Office* series, which consists of three symposia and provides a forum for professionals to examine the varied and, at times, conflicting demands of their positions.
- In partnership with UVA's College at Wise Economic Development Office, the *Entrepreneurship Sampler* will be offered at the Southwest Virginia Technology Development Center on May 30, 2013. The full series of classes are slated to be offered in the fall of 2013.
- Non-Profit Management classes were offered at the Southwest Higher Education Center via digital video conference from Charlottesville.

#### **JEFFERSON PUBLIC CITIZENS ACADEMIC-BASED PUBLIC SERVICE**

- UVA's Jefferson Public Citizens (JPC), a comprehensive academic public service program that integrates students' service and research, funded a faculty course in FY13 that focused on Southwest Virginia. The course examined the relationship between Appalachian culture, economic development, education and health in far Southwest Virginia and explored the process for the design and implementation for collaborative, community-based research. The course exposed students to the methodologies of community organizing, partnership development and community based research.

#### **ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

- A regional blueprint for creating a vibrant entrepreneurial community in Southwest Virginia was created using input from over 50 people representing 37 organizations during a series of workshops. The blueprint identifies strategies that will accelerate growth for both new ventures and established companies and to lay the groundwork for future investments by external agencies. Some FY13 activities:
  - Hosted an Opportunity Summit that attracted 140 attendees, including 60-70 entrepreneurs.
  - Debuted a new website for entrepreneurs, created by UVA-Wise students: [www.myswvaopportunity.org](http://www.myswvaopportunity.org)
  - Announced the "Entrepreneur Challenge," a business plan competition sponsored by the VA Department of Housing and Community Development and

supported by the My SWVA Opportunity Steering Team formerly known as the Entrepreneurship Blueprint Steering Team. More than \$30,000 in business investment grants from Virginia Community Capital will be awarded to new and expanding entrepreneurial ventures.

- Launched the Collegiate Entrepreneurship Organization (C.E.O.), a student club on the UVa-Wise campus
- Coordinated a trip of six UVa-Wise students to participate in the Darden Concept Cup and the Entrepreneurship Conference in November 2012
- Engaged two UVa-Wise students in interviewing and writing short stories of successful entrepreneurs in Southwest Virginia. Stories will be made available on regional entrepreneurship website portal and in printed form.

## **PLACE-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **CLINCH RIVER VALLEY INITIATIVE**

- The Clinch River Valley Initiative (CRVI) is a multi-partner effort to build local economies in Southwest Virginia by leveraging the natural assets of the Clinch River.

Website: [www.clinchriverva.com](http://www.clinchriverva.com)

- Five action groups have been formed to address key goals: 1. Downtown Revitalization, 2. Clinch River State Park, 3. Water Quality, 4. Environmental Education, and 5. Downtown Revitalization and Entrepreneurship.
- The UVa Institute for Environmental Negotiation (IEN), which coordinates and facilitates CRVI, developed a CRVI Action Plan in conjunction with CRVI Action Groups highlighting the background, vision, goals, action items, and next steps for the Initiative, which may be viewed at this website: <http://clinchriverva.com/action-plan/>. IEN has developed a comprehensive Clinch River Valley Initiative map, <http://worldmap.harvard.edu/maps/clinch>, which will continue to be updated and adapted over time.
- Monthly CRVI Steering Committee meetings were held to help guide the future direction of the Initiative with this 25 member consensus-based Committee as well as quarterly CRVI member meetings. Action Group meetings take place in each of the five CRVI Action Groups, which each have volunteer chairs or co-chairs facilitating the groups.

Continued planning for CRVI around fundraising, potential CRVI incorporation, coordination and communication, marketing and logo development and other efforts are taking place at the Steering Committee level.

- A Clinch River Resolution of Support has been circulated and adopted by many regional organizations and elected officials. A copy of the Resolution and current signatories (which are being continually updated) may be found at the website: <http://clinchriverva.com/resolution-of-support/>.
- Planning is underway for a Clinch River Ecological Center by an active committee, including many members of the CRVI Steering Committee.
- CRVI Action Group accomplishments
  - The **Downtown Revitalization Action Group** has been looking into ways in which the river can be leveraged as an economic resource. Future plans for the group include an effort to form a regional identity to help market the area, and an entrepreneurial challenge in fall 2013.
  - The **Water Quality Action Group** is looking at ways to use the CRVI map to identify and prioritize water quality concern areas in order to develop a plan for moving forward. The group plans to hire a “RiverKeeper” to work on the Clinch River, and the group hopes to work on water quality outreach and organize additional river cleanups in the near future.
  - A part-time Outdoor Recreation Specialist position has been hired to assist with the **Access Points, Trails and Campgrounds Action Group**. A Public Access Points Best Practices document was developed. Outreach has been conducted for potential design assistance around planning for outdoor recreation in the Clinch River Valley. Five new key access points will be installed on the Clinch River, which is a key part of the overall Clinch River outdoor recreation strategy.
  - A Clinch River **Environmental Education** Symposium, hosted by the Environmental Education Action group, was held on March 23rd, 2013. The event had approximately 70 attendees with representation from almost all local school systems and students/faculty from Emory and Henry, UVa-Wise, and East Tennessee State University. The group is now planning on content and design for signage to be installed at key access points on the Clinch River over the

coming months and working on curriculum development planning for the proposal Clinch River Ecological Center.

- An Economic Impact Analysis has been conducted by Chmura Economics and Analytics for a Clinch River State Park in conjunction with the **State Park Action Group**. A State Park funding strategy is being developed for land acquisition and state park planning with input from Virginia state agencies as well.

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*For more information contact:*

Pace Lochte

Director, Regional Business Development and Assistant to the President

University of Virginia

[Lochte@virginia.edu](mailto:Lochte@virginia.edu)

434-924-7566