



# APPalachian Prosperity Project

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

*Annual Report  
FY2012*

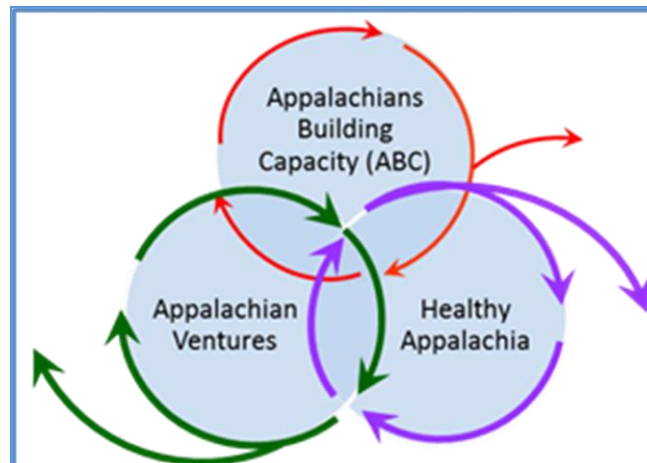


# Southwest Virginia Economic Development Partnership: *Appalachian Prosperity Project*

## UVa's Report to the Commonwealth, FY12

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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.APPProject.org](http://www.APPProject.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, with annual progress reports sent to the Governor and key legislative leaders. 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.

## **FY12 HIGHLIGHTS**

### **FUNDING**

- UVa helped to secure \$375,000 in new funding to bring programs and services to the residents of Southwest Virginia. Over the past four years the total is \$9.8 million. This includes funding for a nurse-managed health clinic, an extensive professional development program for history teachers, strategic planning sessions for place-based economic development, and an in-region engineering degree program for both traditional students and working adults.

### **HEALTH**

- The Healthy Appalachia Institute, in partnership with the UVa-Wise Department of Nursing and the UVa Office of Telemedicine, received a \$20,000 grant from the Verizon Foundation to develop one of the first telehealth nursing curricula in the nation. The funding will enable nursing students to develop skills in tele-nursing, an important emerging resource for specialty care for patients in rural communities. On March 31, 2012, the region's first symposium to advance rural telehealth nursing drew 68 practicing nurses and nursing students together for an all-day educational opportunity eligible for continuing education units (CEU's). Topics included: using telehealth to improve prenatal outcomes; current status and future of telehealth in Virginia; using telehealth to treat chronic disease in rural communities; telehealth nursing in rural Virginia; effectively utilizing telehealth and community collaborations to ensure positive experiences and outcomes; and integrating telehealth in nursing education.
- 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 created a 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 has also been active in helping to reduce mortality from breast cancer by providing over 650 mammograms to women in Southwest Virginia over the last three 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 services and health education throughout Southwest Virginia using an extensive network of telemedicine sites. Over the past year, two additional sites were opened; one at the Southwest Cancer Center in Norton and one at the Health Wagon's new facility in Wise. This brings the number of active telemedicine sites in the region to more than twenty.
- 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. Some successes include:
  - Virginia's approval of telehealth as a mandated benefit for insurance coverage;
  - funds to strengthen efforts in preventing obesity;
  - increased capacity for nurse-managed clinics.

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.

- 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. It has resulted in increased educational opportunities for health care providers, public forums, new programs and effective partnerships. (<http://onecare.org/Blueprint/one%20care%20book.pdf>)
- Over the last three years the Healthy Appalachia Institute Fellowship program has mentored 17 student fellows who have a strong interest in solving health care challenges in the region. More than 50% of the students are now in medical school, graduate nursing education, or are practicing health care professionals.

## EDUCATION

- 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. The fourth year of this work saw the completion of one federal Teaching American History grant, continuing work under the auspices of two others, and a joint proposal by UVa and SVPEC to extend such work in the region into another subject area: pre-engineering. Brief descriptions of these projects follow:

*"Immersion in Traditional History"*: The first of the three US Department of Education grants, which commenced in 2008 and served hundreds of teachers, concluded in June 2012 by bringing 20 teachers to New York City to study immigration at Ellis Island, the fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company, the history of the Intrepid Aircraft Carrier and Museum, the Harlem Renaissance, and the World Trade Center Memorial and future Museum.

*“American Crises”*: The second grant’s work will culminate in July 2013 by issuing “History Specialists” certificates to 23 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.

*“My History Partner”*: The final grant’s second year will have generated powerful data in 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.

*“Engineering the Future”*: Our proposal to the Braitmayer Foundation would use the knowledge of UVa Engineering Faculty to develop a pre-engineering curriculum for Wythe County Schools.

- Total FY12 expenditures in the region from the three existing grants were \$800,000; the new grant proposal is for \$30,000. 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, and the Center for the Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL).
- More than 300 history teachers from the Southwest Virginia region participated in workshops, conferences, field experiences, credit courses, and research in FY12, including 125 teachers from the Coalfield region. The program has been approved as a certificate program for graduate credit offered through the School of Continuing and Professional Studies.
- 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.
  - Over 1,000 teachers participated in UVa-designed and -delivered professional development courses offered through the Center in FY12. The offerings were in the



areas of education, engineering, reading, and non-profit management. In 2011-2012 48% of all Southwest activity (credit and noncredit) was from the Coalfield region and 58% of credit registrations were from the Coalfield region, both representing increases over the previous year.

- UVa's School of Continuing and Professional Studies partnered with the Region VII Gifted Consortium in sponsoring the *Speaking for the Gifted* Conference in 2012. This event was provided free to 250 gifted education teachers in the Southwest Virginia area; 90 participants attended from the Coalfield region.
- Non-Profit Management classes were successfully offered at the Southwest Higher Education Center via digital video conference from Charlottesville. Additional classes are planned for fall 2012.
- The Curry School will deliver the Master's Reading program to Wise County teachers (in a variety of delivery methods); 25 teachers are scheduled to matriculate fall 2012. This master's cohort effort began in 2010 and has come to fruition with much cooperation from the Wise County School System.

#### **EARLY LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

- UVa and UVa-Wise continued work with Kids Central, Incorporated to provide home visiting services to families in the Wise County area. More than 30 families have been served, receiving home-based intervention and print materials to increase the quantity and quality of language interaction in the home and improve the literacy environment.

#### **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 both a student project and a faculty course in Southwest Virginia.
- One student team identified a new method to deliver health education by creating interactive touchscreen tablet quizzes which patients can take while waiting for medical services. Patients had a positive response to the method with over 90

- percent reporting their satisfaction with the health education tutorial and agreeing that they learned new health-related information.
- A spring 2012 JPC-funded 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.
  - A future JPC-funded spring 2013 course will provide students with knowledge, skills and experience using telemedicine opportunities to facilitate community service in rural Southwest Virginia. Aspects of Appalachian culture unique to the region will be integrated into the course to facilitate culture-sensitive communication skills. Students will team with partners at UVa-Wise and the Health Wagon, via a UVa Telemedicine link, and will collaborate on a public health project.

#### **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 goal was to identify strategies that will accelerate growth for both new ventures and established companies and to lay the groundwork for future investments by external agencies. Governor McDonnell declared 2012 to be the “Year of the Entrepreneur,” making this report extremely relevant. Virginia Community Capital cited this blueprint as critical to their work in funding and developing angel networks. The report can be found here:  
<http://aproject.org/documents/ENT.%20Blueprint%20for%20the%20web.pdf>
- The Tayloe Murphy Center at the UVa Darden School of Business recognized the success of two local businesses in FY12. MountainRose Vineyard in Wise was selected as one of five winners out of 88 applicants statewide in the second annual Resilience Award competition. In addition to receiving prominent statewide exposure, one of the firm’s leaders is able to attend a week-long Darden Executive Education course, valued at up to \$12,000, to help continue to grow the business. Southwest Virginia Veterinary Services of Lebanon was also recognized and received statewide acclaim as one of the nine finalists in the competition.

## **PLACE-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- The Institute for Environmental Negotiation, based in UVa's School of Architecture, convened a series of meetings with 75 stakeholders from over 30 organizations to explore new ideas for commerce that leverage the region's unique assets. Using a consensus-based approach, five action groups have emerged around five goal areas that are developing new ventures connected to downtown revitalization and outdoor recreation on the Clinch River. Over \$200,000 in funding has been secured and leveraged as part of the Clinch River Valley Initiative. An action plan is currently being developed and projects are being implemented across all goal areas. Graduate students have assisted with research, meeting facilitation, recording stories, website development, and writing grant proposals.
- A formal connection between Southwest Virginia and the Commonwealth Center for Advanced Manufacturing (CCAM) was established with support from the Tobacco Indemnification and Revitalization Commission. CCAM is deploying \$1.5 million to develop an economic development and workforce training program that will help communities in Southwest and Southern Virginia capture capital investment related to the Rolls-Royce Crosspointe operation in Prince George County.

## **WORLD CLASS EXECUTIVE EDUCATION**

- UVa's Darden Graduate School of Business, through its globally recognized Executive Education program, delivered two advanced business classes to 37 managers at the Southwest Virginia Technology Development Center in Lebanon. The participants are working toward the Darden/UVa-Wise Certificate in Leadership Development.

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