



# Virginia Rural Leadership Institute

PRESENTED BY THE



*Rural Center*

Partnership of the Senator Frank M. Ruff, Jr.  
Center for Rural Virginia and the  
Council for Rural Virginia

## 2024

# Community Impact Projects

Shanetta Beck

*Emporia*

Community and Economic  
Development Director, City of Emporia

Matthew Culbreath

*Dinwiddie*

Asst. Director of Planning and Zoning,  
Dinwiddie County

**Goal: The food truck park strengthens the City's competitive position and facilitating investments and build capacity, create jobs, generate economic opportunity and improve the quality of life.**



2024 VRLI Cohort Experience & Community Impact Projects

**Lincoln Boykin**

*Lancaster County*

Director of Affiliate Programs, Community  
Foundation for a Greater Richmond

**Ian Ginger**

*City of Richmond*

Economic Development Program Dir.  
George Washington Regional Commission

**Goal: Create a workforce housing blueprint  
that can be adopted by rural communities  
with specific focus on Northern Neck**

# Workforce Housing in Rural Communities

- **Problem: Lack of Housing Options for Essential Workers**
  - \$3.6M invested by state in workforce development programming in region since 2017
- **Goal: Create a workforce housing blueprint that can be adopted by rural communities with specific focus on Northern Neck**
- **Implementation:**
  1. **Assembly of Core Project Team**
  2. **Finalization of Blueprint Structure**
  3. **Development of Financing Section**
  4. **Planning for Potential Shovel Ready Projects in the Northern Neck**

Jonathan Comer

*Page County*

SVP – Commercial Lender, The First Bank and Trust Co.

**Goal: Create a private capital fund to help revitalize the Town of Shenandoah**



2024 VRLI Cohort Experience & Community Impact Projects

**David Conmy**

*City of Richmond*

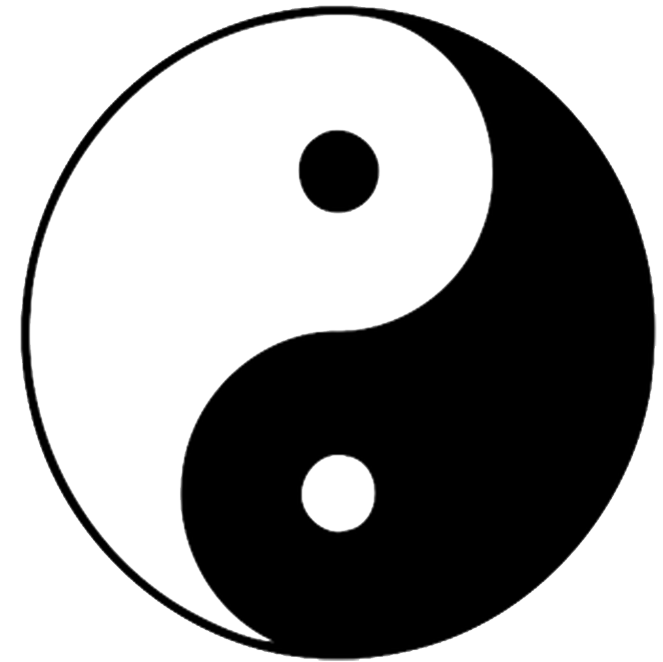
Deputy County Administrator,  
Sussex County

**Andrew Franzysen**

*Dinwiddie County*

Director of Environment, Housing, and Economic  
Development  
Crater Planning District Commission

**Goal: A proposed Virginia Regional Exchange (VREx) would promote mutual understanding and mutual advocacy among different regions of the Commonwealth.**



**Michael Crouse**

*Roanoke County*

Business Development Manager, ECS, Mid-Atlantic

**Goal: Assist communities apply for funding that will initiate private investment, create sustainable jobs, increase tax revenue, and reclaim contaminated or abandoned properties.**

**2024 VRLI Cohort Experience & Community Impact Projects**

# Brownfields Revitalization Resource Roadmap



## INFORM

Present funding opportunities and redevelopment processes in a comprehensible format



## COLLABORATE

Identify rural partners, discern community needs, and engage stakeholders



## GROW

Leverage existing resources to attract additional capital and promote economic development



**Michael Crouse**

[Mcrouse@ECSlimited.com](mailto:Mcrouse@ECSlimited.com)

540-824-5477





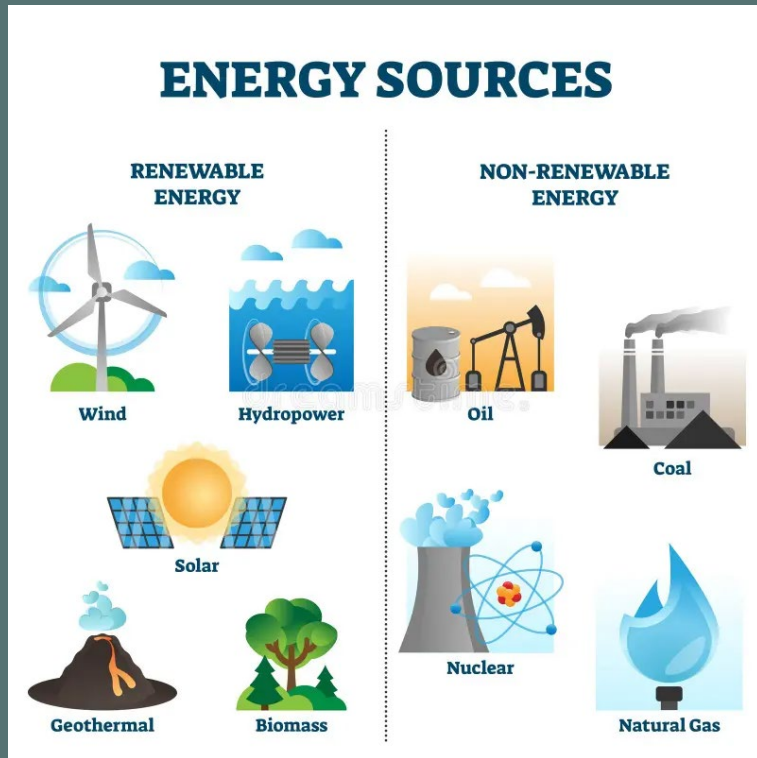
Brian Falin

*Wise County*

IDA Executive Director, Wise County

**Goal: Develop a series of educational materials and resources related to alternative and renewable energy projects specifically target to middle school aged students in Southwest Virginia.**

# VRLI COMMUNITY IMPACT PROJECT: ENERGY EDUCATION



Brian D. Falin

VRLI 2024 Cohort

## Project Goals

- ❖ *Improved Community Education*
- ❖ *Access to Digital Education Resources*
- ❖ *Research, Career Pathways, Curriculum Development, & Pilot Energy Academy*

## Implementation

- ❖ *Coordination with Virginia Energy*
- ❖ *Locality Web Site Updates*
- ❖ *Energy Education Academy Advisory Board*

## Ultimate Impacts

- ❖ *Community Understanding & Support*
- ❖ *Workforce Development*
- ❖ *Successful Regional Energy Sector*



# Heather Fay

*Botetourt County*

Business Advisor + Regional Program Director, Greater Roanoke & NRV Small Business Development Center

**Goal: Attendees empowered with the knowledge and connections to thrive in the ever-evolving agricultural landscape. with the knowledge and connections to thrive in the ever-evolving agricultural landscape.**

SAVE THE DATE

**AGRIPALOOZA**  
where technology meets tradition

AMERICA'S  
**SBDC**  
VIRGINIA  
GREATER ROANOKE & NRV

HEATHER FAY

**3.18.25**

VIRGINIA  
WESTERN

VRLI '24 CIP

**2024 VRLI Cohort Experience & Community Impact Projects**

**Brandy Flint**

*Rockbridge County*

Director of Economic Development, Rockbridge County

**Goal: Develop a strategic plan on childcare to include the results of the survey and community input session, suggested action items including the development of a resource hub and more.**

# Enhancing Childcare Capacity in Rockbridge County

## Capacity Study

- This study is in progress now with the assistance of SERCAP. We are surveying the community and have held three in person townhall meetings and two virtual meetings. Next steps – complete data and interviews with local employers.

## Create a Childcare Cohort

- Once the study is complete a cohort of interested parties will be established to help formulate a strategic plan based on the survey data and community input sessions.

## Develop a Strategic Plan

- This plan will include the results of the survey and community input session, suggested action items including the development of a resource hub and more.



**ROCKBRIDGE**  
COUNTY • VIRGINIA  
Naturally Connected.



# Gerald Goad

*Hillsville*

Clerk of the Circuit Court, Carroll County

**Goal: Revamping and modifications to the Historic Carroll County Courthouse in Hillsville in order to not only have a successful site for the Continuity of Operations Plan, but also a facility that will be beneficial to the county and the Town of Hillsville for future events, event/meeting space, and enhancements to the preservation of our county's rich history.**



**2024 VRLI Cohort Experience & Community Impact Projects**

Jess Gray

*Chatham*

CEO, Gray's Lambscaping LLC

**Goal: Develop a workforce training program for solar farm operations that prepares local students for long-term careers in site management, vegetation management, and safety, while collaborating with solar companies.**



2024 VRLI Cohort Experience & Community Impact Projects

# Matt Herron

*Christiansburg*

Business Development Manager, Virginia Department  
of Aging and Rehabilitative Services

**Goal: Utilize an integrated resource team (IRT) to expand opportunities for persons with disabilities in Southwest Virginia, including initiating, building, and sustaining career pathways opportunities for participants**



**2024 VRLI Cohort Experience & Community Impact Projects**



James Houchins

*Patrick County*

Director of Economic Development, Patrick County

**Goal: Establish an Electric  
Vehicle Charging Station  
at Mayo River Rail Trail.**



2024 VRLI Cohort Experience & Community Impact Projects

**Katelyn Jordan**

*Pungo*

Local & State Advocacy Specialist, Regulatory Coordinator

Virginia Farm Bureau

**Goal: Create a community farm labor portal where farmers can post about jobs they are seeking assistance with, machinery they are selling or seeking, as well as those who are interested in entering the labor market**



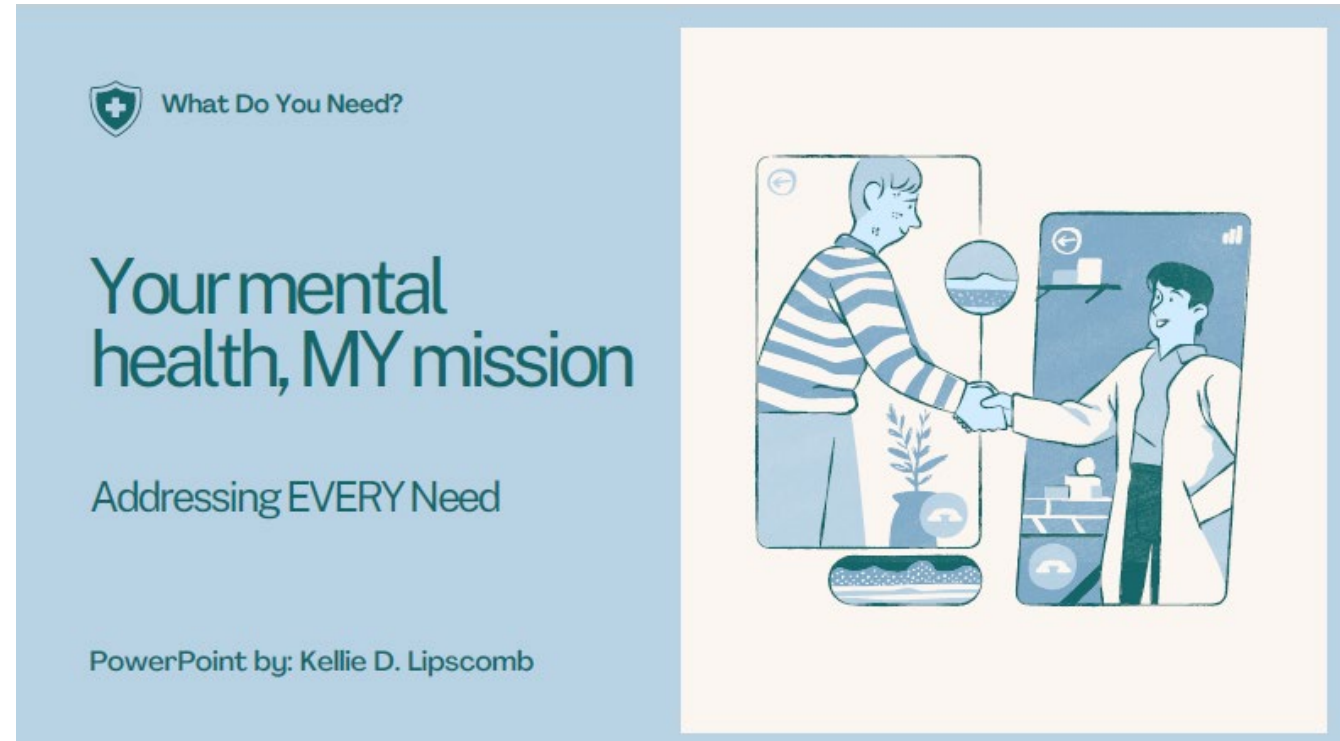
**2024 VRLI Cohort Experience & Community Impact Projects**

# Kellie Lipscomb

*Dinwiddie*

Drug Abuse Treatment Specialist, Federal Correctional Institution

**Goal: Challenge and diminish the stigma associated with mental health issues, particularly among children and adolescents. Educate children and parents about mental health, fostering a supportive and understanding community.**



**Brooke Love**

*Carroll County*

Tourism Director, Carroll County

**Goal: Enhance and preserve public access to Big Reed Island Creek for kayaking, canoeing, and other recreational activities by securing and improving designated access points along the creek**



**2024 VRLI Cohort Experience & Community Impact Projects**

Jacob McCaleb

*Warsaw*

Business Services Representative, Bay  
Consortium Workforce Development Board

Giles Scott

*Warsaw*

Youth Programs Influencer, Bay  
Consortium Workforce Development Board

**Goal: Provide high school students in the Northern Neck with access to after-school programs focused on STEM education and skill-building.**



2024 VRLI Cohort Experience & Community Impact Projects

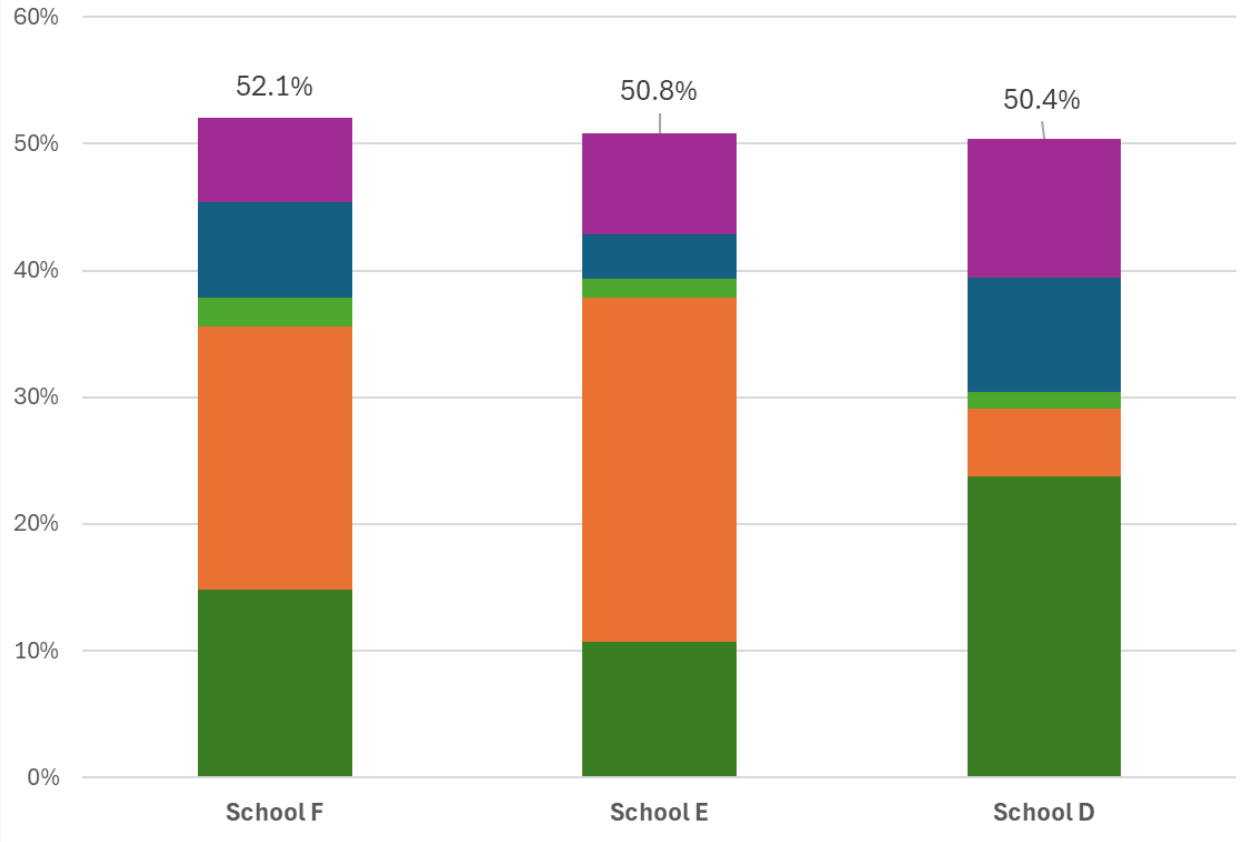
**Stephanie Norris**

*City of Richmond*

Senior Research Analyst, Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond

**Goal: Identify the scale and scope of wraparound services offered at rural community colleges in Virginia**

Different Pathways to Success at Three Rural Community Colleges

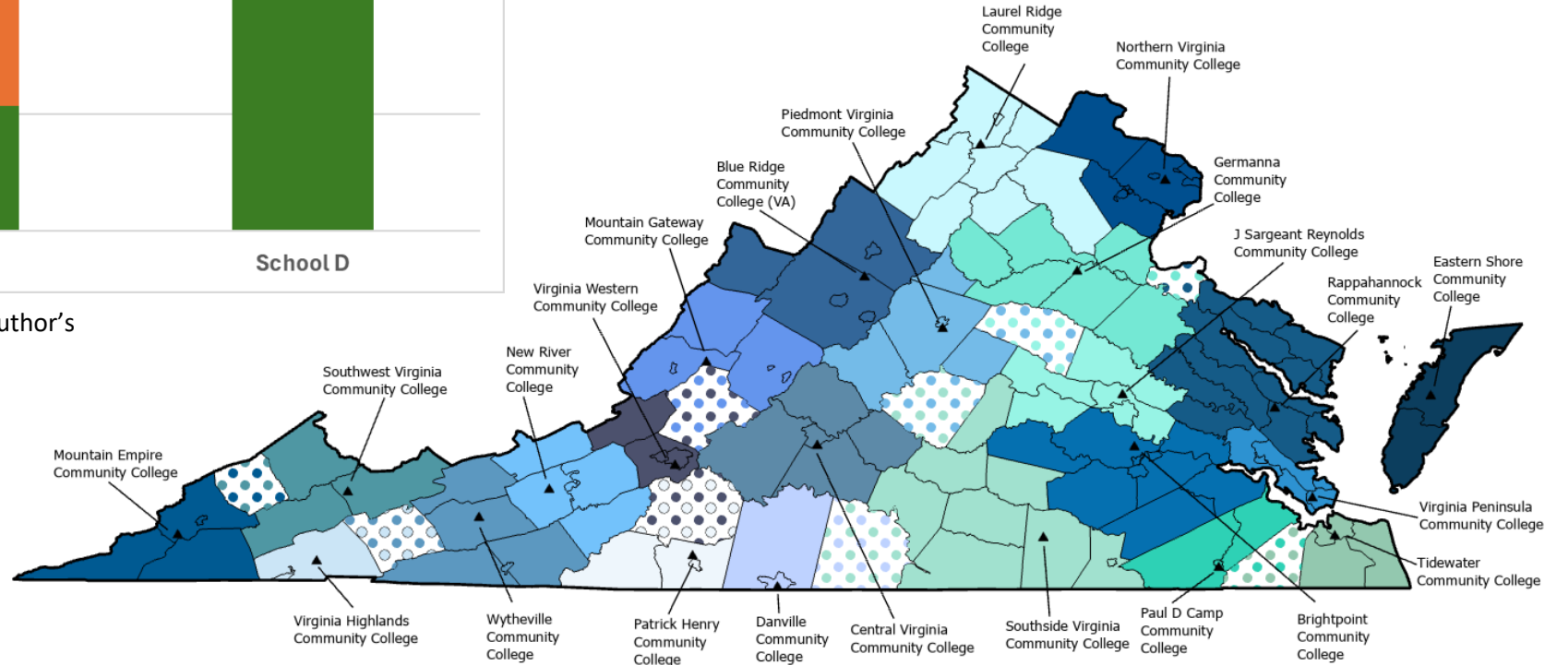


Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond's 2024 SCCO; author's calculations

Note: Results are preliminary and subject to change.

# Empowering Decisionmakers Through Data:

## Understanding and Elevating Community Colleges as Economic Engines



**Kristen Pudlow**

*Prince George County*

Deputy County Administrator, Prince George County

**Goal: Work with county departments to develop education tools to allow citizens, including boards and commissions easier access to information on how local government works to enable better decision-making.**



# COMMUNITY IMPACT PROJECT - KRISTEN PUDLOW

## CITIZEN EDUCATION

NOVEMBER 2024

Motivation: Office of Citizen (unelected)

Goal 1: Equip and Enable Effective Government Engagement

Goal 2: Increase Communication, coordination and Collaboration

Steps:

- Internal Communication Infrastructure,
- Internal Coordination Processes,
- External Education

Results: Better Collaboration between Government and Citizens

“The achievements of an organization are the results of the combined effort of each individual” - Vince Lombardi



Holley Scheffel

*Bedford County*

Master Educator, Prince William County

**Goal: Establish at least one electric vehicle charging station in the Smith Mountain Lake Area to boost tourism opportunities for shopping, fishing, boating, eating, and recreation.**



2024 VRLI Cohort Experience & Community Impact Projects

Jennifer Stevens

*South Boston*

President and CEO, Virginia Ed Strategies

**Goal: Develop regional talent pipeline programs in rural areas of the Commonwealth where resources are more scarce and the needs are greatest for ensuring that our K-12 students are aware of and prepared for high demand jobs**



2024 VRLI Cohort Experience & Community Impact Projects

**Josh Taylor**

*Alleghany County*

Executive Director, Alleghany Highlands  
Chamber of Commerce and Tourism

**Goal: Pursue grant funding to install EV Charging stations in both downtowns to meet the demand of increased tourism and to drive more people into our downtown communities.**

# Installing the First Public EV Chargers in the Allegheny Highlands



**The Need:** The Allegheny Highlands currently has no public EV chargers and only one private, Tesla specific charger in our entire region.

**The Goal:** To bring new & additional visitor traffic into our growing downtown communities of Clifton Forge and Covington. Chargers will be strategically placed within close proximity of downtown shopping & dining to encourage users to enjoy the offerings of our communities while charging their vehicles.

**Implementation:** Through partnerships with the RVARC, the Town of Clifton Forge, The City of Covington & Virginia Clean Cities, we have applied for federal funding to acquire four, dual-port chargers, conducted the necessary site visits in both communities, and have agreements from both the City & Town to install the awarded chargers in four different, high traffic locations.

**Ultimate Impact:** From a tourism visitation standpoint, there is an entire demographic of tourists who plan their travel routes around locations that offer EV Charger access. As a destination with easy interstate access, we continually see visitors with EV's pass by our region and stop at neighboring communities.

*Through the implementation of numerous public EV chargers, we will grow tourism visitation by reaching a new visitor while simultaneously growing visitor expenditures at downtown retail shops & restaurants through strategic placement of the chargers.*



**Josh Taylor**

**Executive Director**

*Allegheny Highlands Chamber of  
Commerce & Tourism*

Tara Tuck

*Clarksville*

Economic Development & Tourism, Town of Clarksville

**Goal: Establish 1 to 3 Electric Vehicle Charging stations in downtown Clarksville to boost tourism opportunities for electric vehicle owners.**

visitclarksvilleva.com

VIRGINIA IS FOR LAKE LOVERS

**EV Charging:**  
a marketing tool for growing tourism

Driving the Future of Transportation & Tourism

Clarksville  
ON THE LAKE  
CLARKSVILLE, VA

Virginia's ONLY Lakeside Town

2024 VRLI Cohort Experience & Community Impact Projects

Jack Wall

*Floyd*

Board Chair & Senior Executive, Wall Residences

**Goal: To improve  
profitability of rural  
farming by adoption of  
biochar and  
composting.**



2024 VRLI Cohort Experience & Community Impact Projects

**Zachary Whitlow**

*City of Richmond*

Community Vitality Program Administrator,  
Department of Housing and Community Development

**Goal: Collaborate with the Altavista's local Main Street organization (Altavista On Track) to spearhead the submission of a Community Business Launch (CBL) application.**



**2024 VRLI Cohort Experience & Community Impact Projects**