

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REGIONALISM

VA West is strongly committed to results-oriented programs that attract investment in technology infrastructure, enhance regional economic development planning and workforce training, and promote cooperative city and county efforts to maintain or attract job growth to the Piedmont, Southside, Southwestern, and Western Virginia. **VA WEST SUPPORTS:**

- Public-private partnerships to expand broadband and telecommunication services across the commonwealth to support economic development, telework, telemedicine, and tele-education access to underserved populations.
- Funding for economic development programs available through the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and GO Virginia.
- Tax reform measures to strengthen Virginia's business climate.
- E-commerce tax measures in fairness to brick-and-mortar businesses and to sustain a sufficient sales tax base to support core government services.
- Expanded incentives for angel and venture capital investments in Virginia businesses and increased funding to commercialize regional research spinoff and startup businesses

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION

VA West recognizes the vital importance of maintaining and developing new and innovative workforce and job development programs to enhance and attract human capital. **VA WEST SUPPORTS:**

- Continued funding and support of the FastForward program.
- Initiatives that strengthen understanding among students, parents, educators, and guidance counselors of CTE opportunities and regionally in-demand careers beginning in middle school or earlier.
- Efforts to improve coordination between Virginia's employers, job training programs, and education communities to meet industry, workforce, and student needs.
- Regional Career and Technical Governors Schools in our VA West coalition communities.
- Emphasis on STEM-H courses in K-12 and Virginia's colleges and universities.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is a core service of government that is critical for economic development and facilitating the efficient delivery of goods and services. The Commonwealth must remain pro-active in meeting the challenge of growing demand on its aging infrastructure. **VA WEST SUPPORTS:**

- Greater consideration of transportation funding alignment to meet economic development needs in Western VA.
- Funding solutions to support improvements identified through the I-81 Corridor Improvement Plan.
- Timely expansion of passenger rail from Lynchburg to Bedford and Roanoke to New River Valley, and continued exploration of expansion to Bristol as originally outlined in the 1998 Bristol Rail Passenger Study conducted by VDRPT.
- Continued exploration of innovative funding mechanisms and additional SMART SCALE weighting to help Western Virginia compete with Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads for transportation dollars.
- Initiatives on air service to expand service at regional airports in Western Virginia.

HEALTHCARE

VA West remains concerned about the uncertainty surrounding the implementation of the PPACA and its impact on Virginia's business community. VA West believes steps must be taken to limit the shifting of uncompensated care onto the business community and other unsubsidized users of Virginia's hospitals and health care providers. **VA WEST SUPPORTS:**

- Legislation that promotes personal responsibility expands affordable health insurance coverage options for employers and improves quality and access to health care while also eliminating waste and abuse.
- Initiatives and additional resources to address the future of mental-health treatment in the Commonwealth.