



**FY24**

**GO Virginia Region 3 Annual Report**

# GO Virginia Region 3 Annual Report for FY24

## I: Introduction

Region 3 is located in rural south-central Virginia, encompassing the largest land area and the smallest population among the nine GO Virginia (GOVA) regions. It includes thirteen counties and two cities. Despite its rural nature, Region 3 is rich in opportunities: it boasts established centers of advanced manufacturing and technology, emerging innovation assets that foster an entrepreneurial ecosystem, educational institutions dedicated to building a skilled workforce, abundant natural resources, and civic leadership that generates the social capital necessary to adapt to changing market conditions. Notably, Region 3 is the only GOVA region that consistently expends all of its per capita allocations annually, a testament to the success of its initiatives, as highlighted in the FY24 Annual Report.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Region 3 Localities</b>                       | Counties of: Amelia, Brunswick, Buckingham, Charlotte, |
|  | Cumberland, Halifax, Henry, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg,    |
|  | Nottoway, Patrick, Pittsylvania, and Prince Edward     |
|  | Cities of: Danville and Martinsville                   |
| <b>Support Organization</b>                      | Southside Planning District Commission                 |
| <b>Targeted Sectors</b>                          | Advanced Manufacturing & Advanced Materials            |
|  | Agriculture & Food Processing                          |
|  | Business Services                                      |
|  | Controlled Environment Agriculture                     |
|  | Energy, Natural Resources, & Finished Products         |
|  | Health Care Services                                   |
| Information Technology & Communications Services |  |



## II: Growth & Diversification Plan

The initial development of Region 3's Growth and Diversification (G&D) Plan was an extensive process designed to establish a robust foundation for future projects and initiatives. Nearly 100 strategically selected stakeholders participated in engagement sessions, which included five virtual group discussions focused on entrepreneurship, business retention and scale-up, sites, and talent. In addition to these sessions, one-on-one and group interviews were conducted with a diverse array of participants, including chambers of commerce, educational institutions, community foundations, youth leaders, grant recipients, economic developers, local government managers, state agencies, innovation catalysts, and business leaders. Business Services; Agriculture & Food Processing; Energy, Natural Resources, & Finished Products; Health Care Services; Information Technology & Communication Services; and Advanced Manufacturing & Advanced Materials were named Region 3's initial Priority Targeted Industry Sectors.

The 2023 Review of Region 3's G&D Plan was a more streamlined process aimed at evaluating the progress of the 2021 update and identifying meaningful adjustments to continue advancing future projects and initiatives. Input was gathered from existing project partners, an ad hoc work group of Region 3 Council members, and the Region 3 staff. The Longwood Small Business Development Center provided data analysis, including employment and wage growth, economic development announcements, SWOT of targeted sectors, workforce gaps, and identification and recommendations for broadening currently targeted sectors. The 2023 G&D Plan Review was approved by the Region 3 Council and State Board. It included modifications to expand the target industry sectors and introduced Controlled Environment Agriculture as a new sector. Additionally, there was a renewed emphasis on implementing the goal of building leadership within both the Council and the Region.

The Region 3 economy in FY24 remained mostly consistent with the metrics presented in the 2021 and 2023 G&D Plans. However, it has become increasingly clear that the Region 3 Council's investments have been exceptionally strategic in building capacity across each targeted sector, with most approved projects supporting more than one sector. To date, Region 3 has awarded a total of 26 projects totaling over \$20 million. These projects were matched with another \$21.5 million in local and private funding. Of the 26 approved projects, 46% focused on talent evolution, 23% on site development, 19% on entrepreneurial ecosystem, and 11% on cluster scale-up.

A table outlining Region 3's targeted industrial sectors, identified in the 2023 G&D Plan Update, along with the related active projects and their primary goal, follows:

| TARGETED INDUSTRY                                      | PROJECT<br><small>*denotes statewide project</small>         | PRIMARY GOAL                 |
|--|--|------------------------------|
| <b>Advanced Manufacturing &amp; Advanced Materials</b> | GO TEC 2025*   | Talent Evolution             |
|  | Gupton Initiative  | Talent Evolution             |
|  | P&HCC Welding Instructor                                     | Talent Evolution             |
|  | SVCC Mechatronics Instructor                                 | Talent Evolution             |
|  | VGA Refresh  | Site Development             |
|  | CRC Redo   | Site Development             |
|  | Southern Virginia Regional Alliance:<br>Business Ready Sites | Site Development             |
|  | Virginia Growth Alliance: Site Development                   | Site Development             |
|  | Mid-Atlantic Broadband<br>Middle Mile Fiber Expansion*       | Site Development             |
|  | Amelia County Site Suitability Study                         | Site Development             |
|  | GO TEC Region 3 Expansion                                    | Talent Evolution             |
| <b>Agriculture &amp; Food Processing</b>               | GO TEC 2025*   | Talent Evolution             |
|  | Southern Virginia Regional Alliance:<br>Business Ready Sites | Site Development             |
|  | Virginia Growth Alliance: Site Development                   | Site Development             |
| <b>Business Services</b>                               | E&I Implementation   | Entrepreneurial<br>Ecosystem |
|  | ExperienceWorks  | Talent Evolution             |
|  | SEED Innovation Hub  | Entrepreneurial<br>Ecosystem |
|  | GO TEC 2025*   | Talent Evolution             |
|  | Bridge to Recovery   | Cluster Scale Up             |
|  | SoVa Health Science Careers TPI                              | Talent Evolution             |
|  | RISE Build-to-Scale  | Entrepreneurial<br>Ecosystem |
|  | GO TEC Region 3 Expansion                                    | Talent Evolution             |
|  | Mid-Atlantic Broadband<br>Middle Mile Fiber Expansion*       | Site Development             |

|   |  |                              |
|---|--|------------------------------|
| <b>Controlled Environment<br/>Agriculture</b>                       | CEA Planning in FY23;<br>Implementation Project in FY25      | Cluster Scale Up             |
| <b>Energy, Natural<br/>Resources,<br/>&amp; Finished Products</b>   | GOT TEC 2025*  | Talent Evolution             |
|   | Southern Virginia Regional Alliance:<br>Business Ready Sites | Site Development             |
|   | Virginia Growth Alliance: Site Development                   | Site Development             |
|   | GO TEC Region 3 Expansion                                    | Talent Evolution             |
| <b>Health Care Services</b>   | Southern Virginia Partnership for Health Sciences            | Talent Evolution             |
|   | GOT TEC 2025*  | Talent Evolution             |
|   | Mid-Atlantic Broadband Middle<br>Mile Fiber Expansion*       | Site Development             |
| <b>Information Technology<br/>&amp; Communications<br/>Services</b> | Mid-Atlantic Broadband<br>Middle Mile Fiber Expansion*       | Site Development             |
|   | GO TEC 2025*   | Talent Evolution             |
|   | RISE Build to Scale  | Entrepreneurial<br>Ecosystem |
|   | Southern Virginia Regional Alliance: Business<br>Ready Sites | Site Development             |
|   | Virginia Growth Alliance:<br>Site Development                | Site Development             |



### III: Summary of Projects

| FY24 Awarded Projects   | GO Virginia Funds  | Total Match      | Local Match      | Additional Leverage |
|---|--------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| GO TEC Expansion  | \$302,690          | \$303,500        | \$147,500        | -                   |
| RISE Build-to-Scale   | \$600,000          | \$300,000        | -                | \$260,000           |
| Amelia County Regional Commerce Center Site Suitability Study | \$21,000           | \$10,500         | -                | \$624,000           |
| TPI: SoVa Partnership for Health Science Careers              | \$133,000          | \$67,500         | -                | -                   |
| <b>FY24 Totals</b>  | <b>\$1,056,690</b> | <b>\$681,500</b> | <b>\$147,500</b> | <b>\$884,000</b>    |

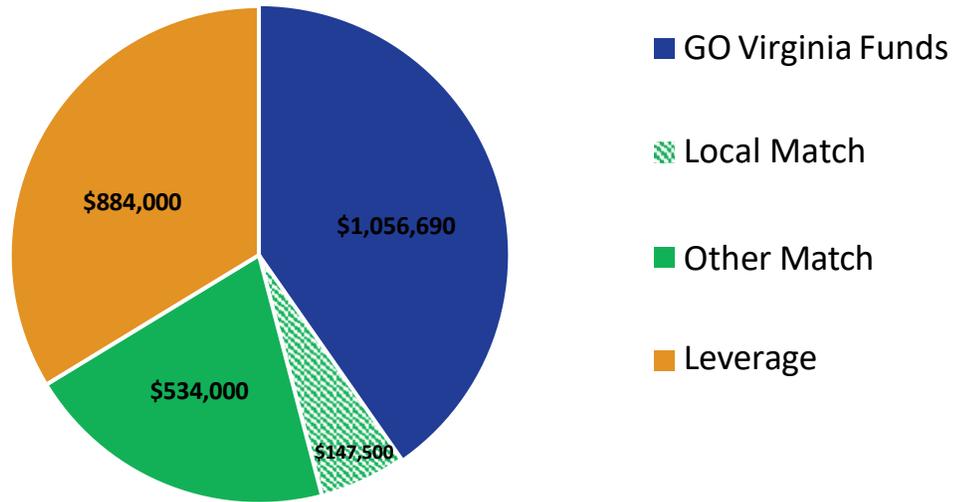


| Project   | Sub-Grantee                                   | Participating Localities   | Project Description  | Relevant Project Metrics   |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| GO TEC Expansion  | Institute for Advanced Knowledge and Research | Brunswick County and Henry County  | The project will establish two new Career Connections labs, one in Henry County and another in Brunswick County. These labs will focus on advanced manufacturing and IT modules, expanding opportunities for students in these critical fields. Additionally, the project will introduce a 9th and 10th-grade bridge pilot program in Henry County. This initiative aims to bridge the gap between the existing middle school GO TEC® programming and the Career and Technical Education (CTE) offerings available in 11th and 12th grade.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 new GO TEC labs</li> <li>• 400 students trained</li> <li>• 2 new teachers trained</li> </ul>  |
| RISE Build-to-Scale   | SOVA Innovation Hub                           | Counties of Amelia, Charlotte, Henry, Nottoway, Prince Edward, Brunswick, Lunenburg, Cumberland, Patrick, Halifax, Buckingham, Mecklenburg, and Pittsylvania | The RISE Build-to-Scale Initiative marks the next phase of the SOVA RISE Collaboration, originally initiated with Region 3’s Entrepreneurship & Innovation Strategy in 2019. This project aims to scale and expand the entrepreneurship ecosystem across Region 3. Key activities will include launching the RISE Community Navigator Program, expanding the RISE entrepreneurship training pipeline, and enhancing outreach and storytelling efforts to broaden engagement and impact.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 new businesses created</li> <li>• 350 entrepreneurs served</li> <li>• \$548,000 capital raised</li> <li>• 63 jobs created/filled</li> <li>• 150 businesses served</li> </ul> |
| Amelia County Regional Commerce Center Site Suitability Study | Amelia County Economic Development Authority  | Heartland Regional Industrial Facilities Authority and Commonwealth Regional Council   | This project will conduct a Site Suitability Study to assess the feasibility of advancing the park from a Tier 2 to a Tier 3 classification. The study will evaluate site features, layouts, and infrastructure to identify the potential industry sectors the site can accommodate. Key activities include assessing public water and sewer capacities, both current and future expandability, investigating existing electrical and gas utility transmission corridors and their potential capacities, and determining which target industries could be supported with the up-tiering of the site. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of Site Suitability Study Report</li> </ul>  |

|   |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| <p>TPI: SoVa Partnership for Health Science Careers</p> | <p>Blue Ridge Partnership for Health Sciences</p> | <p>Counties of Amelia, Charlotte, Henry, Nottoway, Prince Edward, Brunswick, Cumberland, Lunenburg, Patrick, Halifax, Buckingham, Mecklenburg, and Pittsylvania</p> | <p>This project addresses the competitive disadvantage faced by Southern Virginia in recruiting and retaining traded sector business investments due to low healthcare outcomes, decreasing access to healthcare providers, and the scarcity of healthcare workers. The Talent Pathways Initiative (TPI) Plan will identify regional healthcare workforce development gaps and propose strategies to address these gaps complete with an implementation timeline. It will also include a labor market analysis and a comprehensive evaluation of all existing educational and training programs. Additionally, the plan will develop a career pathway to support healthcare education and create a strategy to attract and retain health science talent.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of TPI Plan for Health Science Careers</li> </ul> |
|---|---|---|--|---|



## FY24 Region 3 Project Funding



### IV: Regional Collaboration & Partner Support

Region 3's strength lies in its ability to facilitate successful collaboration. In FY24, Region 3 launched the SOVA Health Sciences Career Planning Project, a Talent Pathways Initiative (TPI). Its partners include all 15 Region 3 localities, 8 higher education partners, and 8 private partners. The continued scale-up of GO TEC partnered Region 3 with Regions 1, 4, and 5, bringing GO TEC to 28% of school divisions across the Commonwealth. The FY22 Controlled Environmental Agriculture (CEA) Planning Project supported the addition of CEA to Region 3's targeted sectors. It also led to the development of a CEA implementation project that is expected to proceed in FY25.

Region 3's dedicated Council members and staff are the key to its success. Region 3 conducted four Council meetings, four Executive Committee meetings, and numerous sub-committee and workgroup sessions in FY24. Region 3 has hosted an annual All Hands Meeting in previous years, bringing together council members, strategic partners, and community stakeholders to network and exchange ideas. However, in FY24, the Council shifted its focus from the traditional All Hands Meeting to proactively address one of the region's top priorities: leadership.

With the anticipated turnover of several founding members next year and additional departures expected in 2027, Region 3 is prioritizing the identification and engagement of potential new leaders now to ensure the organization's sustainability and continued success. Region 3 conducted a Leadership Event, which was well attended by Council members, regional stakeholders, and community leaders. The goal for this event was to identify potential new leaders for the Council and develop implementation steps for leadership sustainability across the region. Dr. Scott Tate with Virginia Tech's Center for Economic and Community Engagement helped to develop and facilitate the meeting. After the meeting, an implementation plan was produced, identifying the next steps to achieving regional leadership goals.

The GO Virginia Region 3 Council relied on many partners during the year. FY24 active project partners include:

- GO Virginia Regions 1, 4, and 5
- Region 3 Counties of Amelia, Brunswick, Buckingham, Charlotte, Cumberland, Halifax, Henry, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Patrick, Pittsylvania, and Prince Edward
- Project Partner Counties of Carroll, Grayson, Wythe, Buchanan, Greenville, Surry
- Region 3 Cities of Danville and Martinsville
- Project Partner Cities of Colonial Heights, Hopewell, Hampton, Newport News, Portsmouth, Norfolk
- Southside Planning District Commission
- Commonwealth Regional Council
- West Piedmont Planning District Commission
- Southern Virginia Regional Alliance
- Virginia's Growth Alliance
- Institute for Advanced Learning & Research
- Longwood University
- Hampden Sydney College
- Southside Virginia Community College
- Patrick & Henry Community College
- Southern Virginia Higher Education Center
- SOVA Innovation Hub Corporation
- Mid-Atlantic Broadband Communities, Inc.
- Commonwealth Alliance for Rural Colleges
- Virginia's Gateway Region
- Hampton Roads Alliance
- Hampton Roads Workforce Council
- UVA's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service
- Southern Virginia Partnership for Health Science Careers
- Heartland Regional Industrial Facilities Authority



## V: Outcomes & Impact

Region 3 had 17 active projects throughout FY24, of which six closed during that period. Of the active projects, nine were implementation projects with relevant data to report. The others were either planning projects or in their startup phase with no reportable data. Projects with reportable outcomes are detailed below.

| Project                                  | Outcomes as of 6/30/2024   |
|--|--|
| SVRA Site Development                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1,561 acres certified as shovel-ready</li> <li>- 4 industrial parks raised to Tier 4</li> <li>- 16 individual sites raised to Tier 4</li> <li>- 1 industrial park raised to Tier 5</li> <li>- 8 individual sites raised to Tier 5</li> </ul>  |
| ExperienceWorks                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 9,143 participants in Career Choice events</li> <li>- 141 students attended work-ready bootcamps</li> <li>- 159 students attended sector-focused camps</li> <li>- 42 participants in a teacher externship program</li> <li>- 113 businesses served</li> <li>- 203 internships created</li> <li>- 149 internship placements</li> </ul> |
| Bridge to Recovery                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1,324 jobs retained</li> <li>- 190 jobs created</li> <li>- 93 businesses served</li> <li>- 12 businesses expanded</li> <li>- 1,431 event attendees</li> <li>- 82 outreach events</li> <li>- 40 project partners</li> <li>- \$4,465,185 in increased revenue</li> </ul>  |
| VGA Site Development                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 7 studies completed</li> </ul>  |
| MBC Middle Mile Construction             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NEPA 95% complete</li> </ul>  |
| Entrepreneur & Innovation Implementation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 20 businesses created</li> <li>- 24 jobs created/filled</li> <li>- 70 early-stage startups supported</li> <li>- 593 adult participants</li> <li>- 458 student participants</li> </ul>   |
| GO TEC 2025                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 19 new teachers trained</li> <li>- training spaces 100% complete</li> </ul>   |
| P&HCC GO TEC Welding Instructor          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 12 students trained</li> <li>- 41 credentials awarded</li> </ul>  |
| SVCC Mechatronics Instructor             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 15 students trained</li> <li>- 104 credentials awarded</li> </ul>   |

## VI: Communication and Outreach

The Region 3 Council maintains a robust communications program through an engagement with Letterpress Communications. This professional firm offers strategic consulting services to develop and execute communication strategies across various marketing channels, including social media, public relations, graphic design, event communications, photography, videography, advertising, and website design and maintenance. Letterpress Communications manages Region 3’s social media platforms, overseeing content creation, post-maintenance, and engagement tracking on Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn. Additionally, they update and maintain targeted media lists—spanning local, regional, state, and national outlets—develop and distribute press releases, pitch stories to national media, and monitor economic news in Region 3 through both traditional and digital channels.

## VII: Project Pipeline

Region 3 is committed to advancing its targeted sectors and fostering regional prosperity through impactful projects. The Council has successfully funded significant planning initiatives that lay a strong foundation for future implementation efforts. The FY24 Project Pipeline includes two such implementation projects, a site development initiative, and efforts to strengthen leadership across the region—another top priority for the Council.

Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) Implementation Project- The Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR) plans to advance Virginia's controlled environment agriculture sector through translational research and economic and workforce development. This project will implement the previous GO Virginia-funded CEA Strategy & Roadmap. Project activities will include entrepreneur support, workforce development, a post-graduate student CEA residency program, a target sector study and business recruitment marketing plan, and the IALR CEA Innovation Center expansion. Project partners include the Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Future Farmers of America, Virginia Western Community College, and TechSpark/Microsoft.

Amelia County Region Commerce Center Planning- The Amelia County Economic Development Authority, in collaboration with the Heartland Industrial Facilities Authority, is seeking a \$100,000 site planning grant from the Region 3 Council. This grant will be used for eligible A&E work necessary to complete the due diligence requirements for achieving a Tier 3 classification by the Virginia Economic Development Partnership. At the request of DHCD staff, a Site Suitability Study is being conducted before submitting the site development application. This recommended study is currently in progress.

SOVA Innovation Labs- The SOVA Innovation Hub has been working on plans to expand the SOVA Innovation Campus in South Boston over the past year. This expansion will include the acquisition and adaptive reuse of an adjacent structure and the development of the neighboring greenspace. The SOVA Innovation Hub has already acquired the adjoining property and building, with plans to construct a digital maker's space, community gathering space, and co-working offices. The project has secured funding from the EDA and the Tobacco Commission. Region 3 is considering supporting the project similarly to the Per Capita grant awarded to the SEED Innovation Hub in Farmville by funding technology-related equipment for the co-working and digital maker's space. The timing and amount of the Region 3 Per Capita grant are yet to be determined.

Region 3 Leadership Development Project- Preliminary discussions have occurred with principals at the University of Virginia's Sorenson Institute for Leadership and the Virginia Institute for Government (Cooper Center units) about developing a community leadership program in Region 3. This program would complement and align with the SOVA Rise Collaborative's training for entrepreneurs. These discussions, along with input from other Region 3 stakeholders, have highlighted a strong interest in pursuing an Enhanced Capacity Building feasibility study. This study would better define the program, its outcomes, and the partner organizations involved. The timing and amount of the Region 3 grant are yet to be determined.

## VIII: Council Members

| Council Member-<br>Email                                 | Title-<br>Organization  | Sector                    |
|--|---|---------------------------|
| Lauren Willis- Chair<br>ltawillis10@gmail.com            | BSA Officer-<br>Bank of Charlotte County  | Private Sector            |
| Tim Clark- Vice Chair<br>tclark@blair-construction.com   | President-<br>Blair Construction, Inc.  | Private Sector            |
| Rhonda Hodges- Ex. Committee<br>rhodges@patrickhenry.edu | Vice President-<br>Workforce, Economic & Com. Dev.<br>Patrick Henry Community College | Workforce<br>Development  |
| Randolph Lail-Ex. Committee<br>randy.lail@earthlink.net  | Chair of the Board-<br>Benchmark Bank and<br>Mid-Atlantic Broadband                   | Private Sector            |
| Clark Casteel- Ex. Committee<br>ccasteel@drfonline.org   | President & CEO-<br>Dan River Foundation  | Non-Profit                |
| Sheldon Barr<br>sheldon.barr@vcuhealth.org               | CEO-<br>VCU Health Community<br>Memorial Hospital                                     | Private Sector            |
| Robert Bates<br>robert.bates@bcbonline.com               | Branch Manager-<br>Halifax Office Benchmark Bank                                      | Private Sector            |
| Melody Foster<br>melodyfoster66@hotmail.com              | Executive Director-<br>Commonwealth Regional Council                                  | Regional Planning Entity  |
| Kristin Gee<br>kristingee@kyanite.com                    | General Counsel-<br>Kyanite Mining Corp.  | Private Sector            |
| Amy Griffin, PhD<br>dramygriffin@gmail.com               | Superintendent (Retired)-<br>Cumberland County Public Schools                         | Civic/Community<br>Leader |
| Keith Harkins, PhD<br>keith.harkins@southside.edu        | Vice President –<br>Academic & Workforce Programs<br>Southside Community College      | Education                 |
| Ilsa Loeser<br>ilsa@letterpresscommunications.com        | Principle-<br>LetterPress Communications  | Private Sector            |
| Charles Majors<br>charley.majors@gmail.com               | Retired Chair of the Board-<br>American National Bank                                 | Private Sector            |
| James McClain<br>james@swvagas.com                       | President & CEO-<br>SW Virginia Energy Industries                                     | Private Sector            |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| John Parkinson<br>jparkinson@drakeextrusion.com        | CEO-<br>Drake Extrusion, Inc.                                       | Private Sector                         |
| Alfreda Reynolds<br>areynolds@brunswickco.com          | Director of Economic Development-<br>Brunswick County               | Local/Regional<br>Economic Development |
| Jeremy Satterfield<br>jeremy.satterfield@microsoft.com | Manager-<br>TechSpark Community Engagement<br>Microsoft Corporation | Private Sector                         |
| Sherry Swinson<br>swinsonsd@longwood.edu               | Director-<br>Hull Springs Farm<br>Longwood University               | Education                              |
| Dale Wagner<br>dwagoner@henrycountyva.gov              | County Administrator-<br>Henry County                               | Local Government                       |

**IX: Support Organization**

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| <b>Region 3 Support Organization</b>              |                     |
| Southside Planning District Commission            |                     |
| 200 S. Mecklenburg Ave South Hill, Virginia 23920 |                     |
| Bryan David- Region 3 Program Director            |                     |
| UVA- Weldon Cooper Center                         |                     |
| Email: rbd7g@virginia.edu                         | Phone: 540-395-6504 |

