



Week of June 1-7, 2008

[www.CarrollCountyVA.org](http://www.CarrollCountyVA.org)

Issue No. 3

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# BRCEDA Looks To Heal Economic Loss

*Since 2006, 290 individuals in the Twin County area have found employment through small businesses and entrepreneurship.*

With the Twin County area suffering job losses from major manufacturers closing its doors and moving to other localities in the world, BRCEDA looks to help individuals regain their employment through offering small business and entrepreneurship development assistance.

Standing for the Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority, BRCEDA works to develop a more stable economic environment through assisting individuals develop their own small business and in turn, enhances the philosophy of purchasing local items, goods and services in the Twin Counties.

"People are working hard for the citizens of this area in finding employment opportunities – that's the story," said Neal Satterwhite – Director of Entrepreneurial & Business Development for BRCEDA. "From our records, we have proof that small businesses and entrepreneurship really works in this area."



**From left, Neal Satterwhite-Dir. of Entrepreneurial Develop., Dr. Oliver McBride-Exe. Dir. of Crossroads Institute, and Dr. Dallas Garrett-Dir. of Small Bus. Develop.**

BRCEDA was first developed in relation to the opening of the former Strike Force Center, which while in operation, served in assisting approximately 1,100 individuals in seeking employment after a massive job loss over a few month period.

Formally known as the Regional Industrial Facilities Authority, BRCEDA consists of a board of directors that include representatives from

the area's government sectors, county administrators and even private citizens.

**BRCEDA Board Members**

- Mike Maynard - Chairman
- C. M. Mitchell – Vice Chairman
- Keith Barker - Secretary
- Gary Larowe - Carroll County
- David Hutchins – Carroll County
- Bill Ring - Grayson County
- Bill Davis – Galax Alternate
- Wendy Gunter – Grayson Alternate
- Sam Dickson – Carroll Alternate

"We're wanting to develop local businesses that have roots to the community and in turn, have a more stable economic foundation in the future," Satterwhite said in response to large companies coming to areas and then moving away.

Satterwhite did mention that even though BRCEDA's focus is developing small entrepreneurial businesses, Tom Elliott of Virginia's aCorridor is currently showcasing the Twin County area in hopes for large industries to come in and locate.

With the learning concept of small business and entrepreneurship, Satterwhite said programs such as the TAKY organization and having all high schools in the Twin County area offering entrepreneurship classes this Fall will educate students in the concept and in turn, educate others. **(continued on page 2)**

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Dallas Garrett, Director of Small Business Development for BRCEDA and former Business Development Specialist for Carroll County works with individuals in assisting them with coming up with a business plan and seek funding for the development of their business.

"We help them through the whole business development process," Garrett said.

According to Garrett's records, since Jan. 1, 43 citizens of the Twin County area have found employment with a total of 290 individuals finding employment through the development of small businesses since 2006. Over \$13 million has been loaned to new and existing businesses to create the 290 new jobs, and that much of this funding has come from local banks within the Twin County area.

With the development of small businesses, the Southwest Regional Enterprise Center, located at the Crossroads Institute in Galax, offers a business incubator program in which individuals can take part in for assistance in the development of their small business.

"Businesses in which start in incubators have a good chance of success," said Dr. Oliver McBride-Executive Director of the Crossroads Institute.

In order for a person to take part in the business incubator program, he or she must have standard ideas and goals for their business, a proper business plan and a qualified liability insurance policy for their potential business practices.

While in the business incubator process, the SREC offers several services for individuals such as reception services, use of office equipment, wireless internet capabilities, access to a conference center, resource library, assistance from outside professional and college business sources and light office space.

So far, 18 acting businesses in the Twin Counties have went through the business incubator program creating a total of 39 jobs since SREC first opened its doors in October 2005.

"As we see a number of business ideas and with the work BRCEDA is currently doing, a pool of potential success for future small businesses is growing. People are definitely taking advantage of our services offered to them," said McBride.

## Visit The Crossroads Institute website!

[www.crossroadsva.org](http://www.crossroadsva.org)

## Farmers' Market Receives Bids For Improvements

*The Southwest Virginia Farmer's Market receives 7 bids toward improvement projects to its infrastructure.*

After having to meet certain criteria in conducting new improvements, the Farmers' Market sought out bids for construction projects in which 7 bids were received for future renovation to the Direct Sales building and other infrastructure.



"We're making sure that we're meeting all the rules and regulations and to be able to negotiate the best work as possible," said Kevin Semones – Manager of the Southwest Virginia Farmers' Market.



According to Semones, the Farmers Market received a grant of \$99,000 from the Rural Development Administration, a \$100,000 grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission and a \$60,000 grant from the

Tobacco Commission for improvements to its facilities. In order to meet certain requirements from the Rural Development Administration, however, the Farmers' Market must seek out bids for improvement projects made on its property.

Planned improvements are constructing a 28x60 foot addition to the Direct Sales building and paving an addition to the area's parking lot. Semones said the Farmers' Market received 4 bids on the building portion of the project, while there were 3 bids received for the parking lot addition.

"We're really happy for the bids we received," said Semones. "Through these bids, we're trying to get the best product for future renovation to our building."

The winner of the bids will be determined within the next few days.

Chairman of Carroll's Board of Supervisors Sam Dickson said, "We're very pleased with this progress that Kevin and the Farmers' Market have made. With these additions and renovations, it will be a strong asset to the county and its citizens in the future."

## PSA Agrees To Advertise New Rates and Fees

*The Public Service Authority agrees to advertise new rates and fees while approving the proposed PSA budget for 2008-09.*

Just after holding an infrastructure workshop on May 21 for looking into possible sewer alternatives, the Public Service Authority held another meeting on May 27 in which took care of a lot of issues for the organization.

First on the order of business, the PSA approved the general public advertising of the proposed fees for a future public hearing.

Director of Operations for the PSA Ray Hill presented to the PSA proposed fees, which includes an approximate \$1 increase on current water and sewer rates and a new capacity fee for new water and sewer hookups.



"Even with adding on the capacity fee, it will still be cheaper than privately installing just a septic system," said Hutchins.

Hill suggested that these fees be offered in an interest-free payment system in providing assistance for PSA customers.

Motion was passed by the PSA and the proposed fees will be advertised to the general public. A public hearing will be held in August.

Next, the PSA approved the organization's proposed budget for 2008-09, which consisted of the PSA's operating account and recent project expenditures such as the Route 100 water, Gladeville/Cranberry water and sewer, Woodlawn, Cana and highway 620/Airport Rd. projects.

Following, Hill stated to the PSA that there have been two proposals for performing fracture trace analysis for exit 1 of Interstate 77 in Lamsburg. The board decided to check for clarification on the proposed projects from one of the proposed bidders before making an official acceptance of a bid.

After coming out of closed session, Hutchins informed the PSA about some possible grants that would be for the installment of a wastewater package plant at exit 19. Motion was made and passed for the county administrator's office to apply for particular grants toward wastewater treatment systems.

Next PSA meeting will be June 9 at 12:30. p.m.

# Strolling Along Fancy Gap Lane

The Fancy Gap area consists of 42 businesses and two major highways making it the 2nd most used exit off the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Where would you find a place that has access to an interstate, a U.S. highway, and even the Blue



Ridge Parkway all in the same locality - you'll find it in Carroll County at Fancy Gap.

"We've got a serious good location," said Gina Isom-owner of Fancy Gap Pottery and Fabric Outlet.

Isom's business is one of 42 current businesses in the Fancy Gap area, ranging from antique stores to real estate agencies and from restaurants to luxury cabin rentals.

I had the opportunity to ride along with Isom and be informed about Fancy Gap in general, visit some of the residing businesses and learn about the unique features of the area.

As the ride-along started, Isom mentioned about the importance for Carroll to get water and sewer systems to Exit 8 – the Fancy Gap exit of Interstate 77 for future development and growth. "We need water and sewer if we're going to have infrastructure," Isom said.

Throughout Isom's tour, we made stops at a couple of businesses in the area, including

Treasure Potts – an antique and garden shop.

"You'd be surprised how many various people shop here," said Margaret Barnhardt – co-owner of Treasure Potts. Margaret and her husband Charles, the other co-owner, said since their business opened in 2006, they have

had people representing approximately 30 states and 6 countries visit their store. They give a lot of credit for this coming from traffic on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

The next stop was Fancy Gap Dress Outlet, which has been in business for 38 years. After starting out as a produce store, the Dress Outlet has become one of Fancy Gap's most popular places. "We have approximately on average 230 paying customers per week," said Dennis Hiatt

– co-owner of Fancy Gap Dress Shop.

Hiatt and his wife Bonnie have been owners of the business for 20 years.

In addition to Fancy Gap's many features, it has the famous name of being the former home of Virginia Tech football head coach Frank Beamer.

After going by other businesses and localities in Fancy Gap, Isom gave me a tour of her business at Fancy Gap Pottery and Fabric Outlet – a 45,000 square foot property offering different forms of pottery, outdoor ceramics, giftware, silk flowers, and many other various items.

"I feel like Carroll County is in a position right now in realizing and going forth in trying to bring infrastructure to this area," Isom said. "We just have to use what we have right now to make things work."



According to Donnie Turner - Tourism Director for Carroll County, 6.2 million people travel the Blue Ridge Parkway year round with approximately 45,000 vehicles passing by exit 8 on Interstate

77. Turner said that the county generated over \$1 million from tax revenues from just tourist related businesses in 2007.

## Winterberry Gallery Brings Artistic Value To Area

Located in Carroll, Winterberry Gallery offers custom framing, professional photography and local art consignment.

With the love and skill of photography and various forms of art, Corey Jones came back to her home area after graduating college and opened up her very own art store – Winterberry Gallery, located on Winterberry Ln. just outside of Galax in Carroll County.

"I wanted to have a business with a different quality to it," said Corey Jones – co-owner of Winterberry Gallery.



The store serves has three separate businesses into one: custom framing, professional photography and an art consignment shop featuring works from local artists of the Twin Counties. With



the offering of three different businesses, Jones said this is what makes her store unique from the other ones in the area.

Jones received her degree in photography and digital imaging from Virginia Intermont College in Bristol, Va. After graduating from college, Jones said she received overwhelming support from her parents and her husband into coming back to the area she grew up in and open up her very own art store. "It kind of was a family effort," Jones said.

Winterberry Gallery first opened its doors in the Fall of 2007. Both Jones and her mother Cherie Stockner currently own and operate Winterberry Gallery.

In addition to stating how much help her family gave in the development of starting her business, she also gave credit to Dr. Dallas Garrett – Director of the Small Business Development portion of The Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority in writing her business plan and presenting it to banks and other financial localities for funding. "Dr. Garrett made it look like [Winterberry Gallery] was possible to do," Jones said.

Winterberry Gallery will be offering a painting class open to the public during the week of Jun. 23-27. Plans are currently underway this upcoming summer for a possible art show featuring local artists demonstrating their artwork along with a bluegrass band concert.

The business is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

## One On One With The Officials

**Mr. Terry Woods - Animal Control Officer for Carroll County**

Mr. Terry Woods provides a different public service than the rest by serving as Animal Control Officer for Carroll County.

After being born and raised in the county, Mr. Woods started out his working career in manufacturing and construction before becoming the county's Animal Control Officer.

The Animal Control Officer for Carroll County holds a broad range of responsibilities from enforcing state and local animal control laws pertaining to a person's pet to taking in rabid animals that are reported to him by the citizens of the county.

According to Mr. Woods, "We are here to serve the public on what precautions to take if an animal seems rabid. Animals have a spot on this Earth too and we all have to keep that in mind."

