

EDA News

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Leach Run Parkway Completed Dedicated to Community in June

The Leach Run Parkway, connecting Happy Creek Road to John Marshall Highway in Front Royal, Virginia is finished. The project, which has been on the infrastructure slate for thirty years was officially opened and dedicated to the community on June 26, 2017.

The four-lane, divided parkway will provide direct access to the new Warren County Middle School, the eastern end of the Town, Warren County High School and Hilda J. Barbour Elementary School and will circumvent travel into the center of Town and circling back to reach Route 55, John Marshall Highway.

Jennifer McDonald, Executive Director of the EDA, served as Project Manager for the job. EDA spent almost \$3.72 million to acquire more than a dozen properties and easements necessary for the project. The total cost for the project is estimated at \$15.87 million.

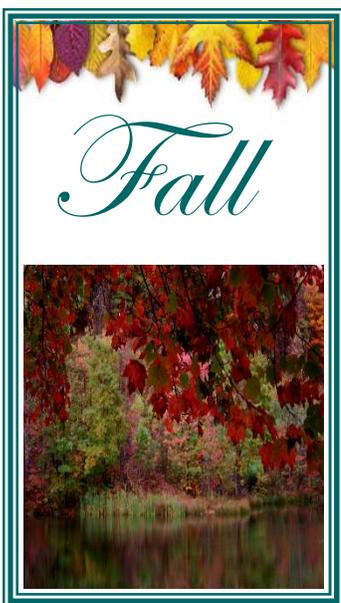
EDA received funding through the Virginia Department of Transportation cost-sharing program that will provide approximately fifty percent of the project cost. Warren County will cover sixty-six percent of the remaining cost, and the Town of Front Royal will cover thirty-four percent.

"I commend the EDA and Executive Director, Jennifer McDonald, for their leadership in getting [this project] completed," said Doug Stanley, Warren County Administrator. He also pointed up the positive work that the EDA has done.

"There are more shopping opportunities in the community, and they've created jobs and investment.

"It's amazing what can be done when everyone is working toward the same goals," he said.

"The EDA is happy to be a part of this project and to see it finally come to fruition," said Jennifer McDonald. "Really good things are happening in Front Royal, and the EDA is glad to be a part of that." ○ Source: Warren and Frederick County Report, Carol Ballard, Mid-July 2017; The Northern Virginia Daily, Alex Bridges, July 12, 2017.



"Really good things are happening..."

EDA Announces Developer for Workforce Housing Project

The Economic Development Authority announced The Aikens Group, a private developer from Winchester, Virginia, as the developer of the 36-unit workforce housing apartment complex on 3.6 acres of land on Royal Lane in Front Royal, Virginia.

The EDA has been working with The Aikens Group since November 2014, when they met with EDA. Based in Winchester Virginia, the Aikens Group is a premier development firm in the Shenandoah Valley that serves the Interstate 81 and Interstate 66 corridors from Martinsburg, West Virginia to Woodstock, Virginia. (www.AikensGroup.com.)

The EDA agreed to spearhead the project for the Aikens Group. By initiating and pulling the permits for the project, EDA has upheld its agreement to maintain confidentiality as requested by Aikens.

With only a few more permits to be finalized, The Aikens Group is comfortable in announcing their plans for the 36-unit Royal Lane apartment complex. "The three-building complex will be a nice fit for the Town of Front Royal and we are excited to have another project in Warren County," said Jason Aikens, Aikens Group Vice President.

"We are pleased to see this project come to fruition," said Greg Drescher, EDA's Chairman of the Board of Directors. "This endeavor is an example of how our EDA has been willing to spearhead a unique project in order to have a positive impact on our community's workforce. Our community has been talking about doing something to increase workforce housing options for well over 10 years.

"In the not-too-distant future we will be able to offer an upscale housing option for our middle class working citizens. Our hope is now that a workforce housing project is happening other private developers will see the economic benefit to adding additional workforce housing to our community. The EDA is proud to have gotten this project off the ground." ○

Public-Private Partnerships



nect prospective employees to available jobs would have never come to fruition. We are proud that NSVRC was able to play a role in fostering that collaboration."

Jennifer McDonald, Executive Director of the Front Royal-Warren County EDA added, "The EDA was happy to participate in a much needed service for the residents and employees of Warren County. We hope this opens up employment opportunities for those that do not have access to affordable and consistent transportation to the employers in the corridor." ○

For more information:
www.warrencountyva.net

Corridor Connector Trolley Launched

County Administrator Douglas P. Stanley announced the start of transit service for the Route 340/522 Corridor beginning, which will extend from Front Royal to the Route 340/522 Corridor and Lord Fairfax Community College (LFCC) in Middletown. Buses will run Monday through Saturday originating alternately from Royal Plaza or the Warren County Health and Human Services Complex to the Crooked Run and Riverton Commons shopping centers. There will also be limited commuter service to the Rappahannock-Shenandoah-Warren (RSW) Regional Jail and nearby large employers along Fairground Road, Baugh Drive and Toray Drive. The buses will make four runs daily to the LFCC campus Monday through Thursday.

"The service has been made possible through the generous support

of our corporate partners including Axalta, Crooked Run Shopping Center, Front Royal-Warren County EDA, FDR Services, The Interchange Group, Lord Fairfax Community College, Nature's Touch, Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission, Rappahannock Electric Cooperative, RSW Regional Jail, Sysco, Toray Plastics, and Valley Health. This is truly a Public-Private Partnership," said Stanley.

Karen Taylor, Senior Project and Operations Manager at the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission commented, "This new transit service represents a perfect example of what can be accomplished through true regional collaboration. Without participation from multiple private sector, non-profit, and governmental partners, this opportunity to physically con-

EDA Announces Developer for Afton Inn

The Economic Development Authority announced recently that it has entered into an agreement with MODE Partnership, LLC to purchase the Afton Inn property for redevelopment.

The EDA and Town agreed some time ago to sell the property for a nominal price in order to attract the investment money required to properly develop the parcel and jettison the project moving forward.

The estimated cost to MODE for rebuilding the former Afton Inn will be \$2.1 million. After consultation with many developers across the region, it was decided that due to the condition of the remaining shell of the Afton Inn, renovation is not a financially sound option.

So, the EDA, Town and MODE have agreed to move forward with demolition of the remainder of the structure and rebuild to a similar design. It is MODE's plan to retrieve and recycle much of the brick and wood material from the site to incorporate into the new structure.

The timeline for development includes delivering a demolition application, which must be submitted by the EDA to the Town Planning Department. That application will go before the Board of Architectural Review in August. Once approved, the developers are planning to start demolition in the fall. The design plan will call for apartments on the top two floors and a restaurant on the first floor.

"We feel having a quality, right priced restaurant and beer garden with live music and a 'my work' type meeting space with WiFi will support local business members, traveling workers or tourists," said Gabe Nassar, President of MODE Partners.

"Our concept of two story studio apartments above will feature open

plan layouts with the Pedini kitchen line. The recycled brick and wood will help tie in the memory of the old building while adapting to more modern design and safety standards."

Built around 1868, the Afton Inn – or Montview Hotel, as it was originally known – sat at the northeast corner of Main Street at the intersection of North Royal Avenue. It served for many years as a cool respite away for city dwellers, as well as a stop-over point for travelers

But, over the years it fell into disrepair and deterioration, posing an eyesore and what many believed to be safety concerns

It was decided in January of 2014 by Town Council to trade the Town Hall for Afton Inn, and to accomplish that real estate trade through the brokerage of the Economic Development Authority, who would take ownership of the Inn, conduct the real estate transaction, agree to market the property and oversee the development in the best interest of the community.

The EDA's Board of Directors voted to approve the deal and Town Council held a public hearing on the proposed transaction, and a Memorandum of Agreement was signed by the Town and the EDA. This transaction allowed the EDA and Town to leverage more control over the site and to begin to market its

redevelopment.

The former owner of the Inn, Frank Barros, was agreeable to the property trade and contracts were drawn up and signed, and Mr. Barros became the new owner of the Town Hall property. Ownership of the Town Hall carries with it certain covenants requiring the owner to protect and maintain the exterior appearance of the historic building and if the property should go up for sale, will give the Town the right of first refusal.

"We want the best use for this property," said Jennifer McDonald, Executive Director of the EDA. "It is an anchor site along our historic Main Street and downtown area, it's a gateway property and we want it to be developed to the highest standard possible."

"We think the redevelopment of the Afton Inn property will add visible vitality that will help draw people to Main Street as they pass through heading to Skyline drive or other area attractions."

"The EDA is very happy to begin the process of redevelopment of this important property," said Greg Drescher, Chairman of the EDA. "The community has waited a long time for this and we believe it will become a great asset to the Town, to the downtown revitalization and to the people of Front Royal." ○



**The
Economic Development Authority**

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*While we are
mourning the loss of
a friend, others are
rejoicing to meet
her*

behind the veil.

~John Taylor~

In Memory:
Patty Wines, 1935-2017
EDA Chairwoman 2008-2017

VA Apprenticeship Program Available

The Virginia Registered Apprenticeship is a training system that uses custom-designed programs to train the workforce. Employers provide on-the-job training for their employees in a variety of occupations, ranging from high tech to skilled trades.

The program is a training system that produces highly skilled workers through a program of on-the-job training and theoretical classroom instruction.

For employers: to become a registered Apprenticeship Sponsor, contact: Debby Hopkins, at the Shenandoah Valley Workforce Development Board,
dhopkins@valleyworkforce.com

or the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry Apprenticeship Representative
http://www.doli.virginia.gov/apprenticeship/search_title_city.cfm or 804.371.2327. ○

Congratulations, Scholarship Winners

The EDA would like to congratulate Warren County High School and Skyline High School graduates Brendan McMackin, Amanda Rapp, Destiny Rosenberry and Jacob Freeman on their EDA scholarship awards. "This year we were able to award \$5,500 in scholarship money," said Jennifer McDonald, "one of the most substantial award years we've ever had."

Contributors to the 2017 EDA Scholarship Award Program include: L Dee's Pancake House; Lil Rugratz Daycare; Rappahannock Electric Cooperative; Toray Plastics America.

If you are interested in donating to the EDA Scholarship Awards 2018, please contact Missy Henry at 540.635.2182 or mhenry@wceda.com. ○