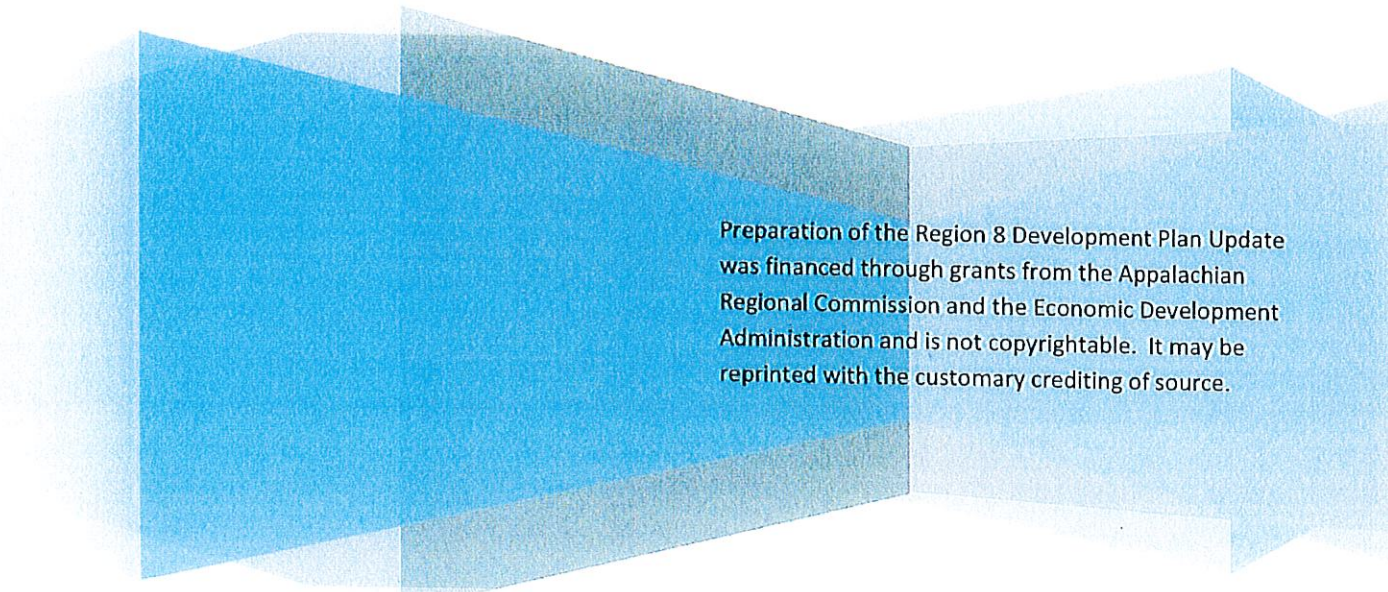Region 8 Planning and Development Council

# FY 2025 Regional

# Development Plan Update

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

2024 Annual Report

# Contents

## Introduction

The Region 8 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is a tool used to promote development in the Potomac Highlands. The plan describes the resources of the region, identifies areas of need, and sets forth goals and strategies to develop the Potomac Highlands in a sound and sustainable manner. Without such a tool, needed development may not occur or will occur in a manner that harms the Region's quality of life and environment.

The Region 8 Planning and Development Council has maintained its planning process for over forty years. During that period, Region 8 PDC has continuously worked to improve its planning process. The current process reflects the Council's desire to have a plan that derives from gathering significant input from a broad range of sectors and fosters sustainable long-term growth without sacrificing environmental quality.

The resulting plan should be looked at as a living document derived from an evolving process. The Council expects that the plan will continue to evolve as it moves forward in its effort to foster economic and community progress.

## Purpose

The FY 2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update is issued to Governor Jim Justice and the United States Economic Development Administration to comply with the Economic Development Administration Act of 1965, as amended, and the West Virginia Regional Planning and Development Act.

## Mission

It is the mission of the Region 8 Planning and Development Council to obtain the maximum level of sustainable economic and community development in the Potomac Highlands of West Virginia through development, planning and by assisting local governments and businesses implement projects and programs.

## Organization

The West Virginia Planning and Development Act of 1972 mandates the division of the State into planning and development regions. The Act also mandates forming Regional Councils in each area and that at least fifty-one percent of the Council's membership be locally elected officials. These members may select other people to serve on the Council, thus permitting input from major sectors of the regional community.

The Region 8 Planning and Development district was formally designated on May 3, 1972, consisting of Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral and Pendleton Counties. The Region 8 Planning and Development Council, which serves as the Region's board of directors, is composed of representatives from the district's five county commissions, twelve municipalities, and up to 16 members representing various elements of the private sector.

### Grant County

| | |
|---|---|
| Gary Michael | City of Petersburg |
| Brady Kitzmiller | Town of Bayard |

### Hampshire County

| | |
|---|---|
| Beverly Keadle | Town of Romney |
| Laura Turner | Town of Capon Bridge |

### Hardy County

| | |
|---|---|
| Carol Zuber | Town of Moorefield |
| Steven Schetrom | Hardy County Commission |
| Amy Funkhouser | Private Sector |
| Mallie Combs | Private Sector |
| Betsy Orndoff-Sayers | Town of Wardensville |
| Megan Webb | Private Sector |
| Elwood Williams | Private Sector |

### Mineral County

| | |
|---|---|
| Roger Leatherman | Mineral County Commission |
| Diana Baker | Town of Carpendale |
| Bill Shepherd | Town of Ridgeley |
| Paula Boggs | City of Piedmont |
| Michael Bland | Private Sector |
| Andrew Bobb | Town of Elk Garden |

### Pendleton County

| | |
|---|---|
| Frank Wehrle | Town of Franklin |
| Bill Loving | Private Sector |
| Carl Hevener | Pendleton County Commission |
| Joan Ashley | Private Sector |
| Dale Walker | Private Sector |
| J. D. Wilkins | Private Sector |

## Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee Roster

### Grant County

| | |
|---|---|
| Gary Michael | City of Petersburg |

### Hampshire County

| | |
|---|---|
| Beverly Keadle | Town of Romney |

### Hardy County

| Carol Zuber | Town of Moorefield |
| Steven Schetrom | Hardy County Commission |
| Amy Funkhouser | Private Sector |
| Mallie Combs | Private Sector |
| Megan Webb | Private Sector |
| Elwood Williams | Private Sector |

### Mineral County
| Roger Leatherman | Mineral County Commission |
| Diana Baker | Town of Carpendale |
| Bill Shepherd | Town of Ridgeley |
| Michael Bland | Private Sector |

### Pendleton County
| Frank Wehrle | Town of Franklin |
| Bill Loving | Private Sector |
| Carl Hevener | Pendleton County Commission |
| Joan Ashley | Private Sector |
| Dale Walker | Private Sector |
| J. D. Wilkins | Private Sector |

## Programs

### *Community and Economic Development*

Region 8 Planning and Development Council is responsible for fostering community and economic growth through planning and development in the district. The Regional Planning and Development Act empowers the Council to receive and expend funds; engage in comprehensive development planning; publish specialized studies; provide technical assistance to local governments; perform regional development; and exercise powers jointly or in cooperation with agencies and political subdivisions of the state. The Regional Council receives funds from federal, state, and local governmental organizations to provide its services. Through its Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, the Region 8 Planning and Development Council provides a planning base for economic growth and community improvement and provides community development support to local governments. The Council works with local governments and their authorities to expand and improve water/sewer systems, industrial parks, and other infrastructure needed to make the Potomac Highlands economically competitive and to provide a quality living environment for residents. Most of this activity focuses on financial packaging and the administration of infrastructure projects. Region 8 Planning and Development Council employs an experienced staff and has committed local elected officials and community leaders.

The Region 8 Planning and Development Council offers several economic development tools to local businesses and member governments. The Council sponsors loan programs that

assist businesses with expansion, retention, or start up. These loan programs can be combined with both state and conventional lending sources to create attractive financial packages.

### Community Service Programs

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) trains income eligible persons aged fifty-five and older to serve in various community agencies to prepare for unsubsidized employment. SCSEP assists with job search and placement (part-time/full-time) in the private sector. Region 8 Planning and Development Council operates SCSEP programs in Berkeley, Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Jefferson, Mineral, Morgan, and Pendleton counties.

The Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) places senior volunteers in schools, day care facilities, and/or head start centers to help tutoring/mentoring students with special needs. Foster Grandparent participants receive a stipend of $4.00 an hour for volunteering a minimum of 15 hours a week, reimbursement for transportation, meals, annual physical examinations, and accident and liability insurance while on duty. Region 8 PDC operates FGP programs in Barbour, Berkeley, Doddridge, Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Harrison, Jefferson, Mineral, Morgan, Pendleton, Pocahontas, Randolph, and Taylor counties.

The Region 8 Planning and Development Council provides staffing and administrative services to the Upper Potomac Area Agency on Aging www.upaaa.net and its Aging and Disability Resource Center www.wvnavigate.org/adrc/.

### Executive Staff

| | |
|---|---|
| Melissa Earle – Executive Director | Melanie Ours – Social Work Director |
| Ashley Anderson– UPAAA Director | Patricia Veach – SCSEP Director |
| Myra Vance – FGP Director | |

## Executive Summary

Region 8 Planning and Development Council provides a strategic array of services to support economic and community development, planning and intergovernmental cooperation in Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral and Pendleton counties and the towns/municipalities of Bayard, Capon Bridge, Carpendale, Elk Garden, Franklin, Keyser, Moorefield, Petersburg, Piedmont, Ridgeley, Romney, and Wardensville. To improve the quality of life for Potomac Highland residents, for over 40 years, Region 8 Planning and Development Council has assisted its members with hazard mitigation, strategic planning, project development, grant writing, preparing loan/grant applications, project management/administration, technical assistance, procurement, and funding searches.

# Map #1



Region 8 Planning and Development Council
- Potomac Highlands
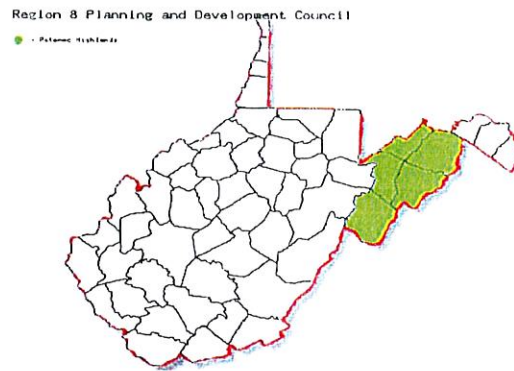
In March 2020, the nation entered COVID-19 pandemic which impacted the local, national, and global economy. The region was not immune to the devastating results of temporary business closures, manufacturing shutdowns and layoffs. According to the WVU Bureau of Business and Economic Research, "Employment performance has been especially strong over the past three years or so. While West Virginia overall had not fully recovered from the recession associated with COVID-19 by the end of 2023, the Potomac Highlands region had fully recovered and added additional jobs above 2019 levels. In particular, the region added around 900 jobs between 2019 and 2023, a growth of nearly four percent.

This recent growth has been almost entirely driven by additional jobs in Mineral County. Mineral County is up around 1,000 jobs since 2019. Hampshire County has also contributed around 200 additional jobs since just before the COVID-19 pandemic. In contrast, Grant, Hardy, and Pendleton have each lost a relatively small number of jobs since 2019."

Other key indicators to describe the state of the Region's Economy in 2023

- "Overall, the region contains just over 24,000 jobs. Mineral County is the largest county, with over 9,000 jobs. Pendleton County, in contrast, housed only 1,470 jobs in 2023, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates."
- **2023 AVERAGE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE** for the region was 3.39 percent, slightly lower than West Virginia's at 3.8 percent and the National average of 3.69 percent.  Overall, unemployment is very low, by historic standards, for all five counties of the region.
- **THE OVERALL LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE** in West Virginia was just over 53 percent for 2023. This figure is lowest among the 50 U.S. states; the state lags the national figure by eight to nine percentage points. Improving labor force participation is an important component of economic development in West Virginia. Three of the counties of the Potomac Highlands Region – Grant, Hardy, and Mineral - report a higher labor force participation rate than the state overall, indicating relative strength in the labor market structure of these counties. However, these counties all lag the national rate of labor force participation, which is around 62 percent. Pendleton and Hampshire lag the state overall in terms of labor force participation.

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[1] Potomac Highlands Region Economic Outlook 2024; published by Bureau of Business & Economic Research, West Virginia University, College of Business and Economics – page 1-10.

- **PER CAPITA PERSONAL INCOME** on per capita personal income in the region, Pendleton and Mineral have income levels that are slightly above the state overall, where the average is just under $53,000. However, all counties fall well short of the national figure, which stands at around $65,000.

The full Potomac Highlands Economic Outlook 2024 is contained in Appendix A.

## Recent Economic Trends

Attracting and retaining population in the Potomac Highlands has proved problematic over the last decade. The following table provides a comparison of labor force, employment and unemployment for the region and its counties.

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[1] Potomac Highlands Region Economic Outlook 2024; published by Bureau of Business & Economic Research, West Virginia University, College of Business and Economics – page 1-10.

## Table #1

| 2022 | Grant | Hampshire | Hardy | Mineral | Pendleton | Region |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Labor Force | 5,957 | 11,233 | 5,697 | 12,526 | 3,826 | 39,239 |
| Employed | 5,737 | 10,936 | 5,467 | 12,054 | 3,728 | 37,922 |
| Unemployed | 220 | 297 | 230 | 472 | 98 | 1,317 |
| *Unemployment Rate | 3.7% | 2.6% | 4.0% | 3.8% | 2.6% | 3.34% |
| 2021 | Grant | Hampshire | Hardy | Mineral | Pendleton | Region |
| Labor Force | 5,109 | 9,529 | 6,454 | 12,403 | 2,697 | 36,192 |
| Employed | 4,771 | 8,876 | 6,293 | 11,630 | 2,546 | 34,116 |
| Unemployed | 338 | 653 | 161 | 773 | 151 | 2,076 |
| *Unemployment Rate | 6.6% | 6.9% | 2.5% | 6.2% | 5.6% | 5.56% |
| 2020 | Grant | Hampshire | Hardy | Mineral | Pendleton | Region |
| Labor Force | 5,959 | 10,847 | 5,865 | 12,249 | 3,710 | 38,640 |
| Employed | 5,580 | 10,253 | 5,445 | 11,323 | 3,529 | 36,130 |
| Unemployed | 389 | 594 | 420 | 926 | 181 | 2,510 |
| *Unemployment Rate | 6.5% | 5.5% | 7.2% | 7.6% | 4.9% | 6.34% |

Sources: https://factfinder.census.gov and https://www.workforcewv.org

- **EMPLOYMENT GROWTH FORECAST** The forecasted growth rate represents the average annual employment growth from 2023 through 2028, inclusive. Overall, the forecast calls for growth for three of the region's counties. Losses are expected to continue in Pendleton County, and Grant County is expected to remain stable. Mineral County is expected to continue to grow, albeit at a much slower rate compared to the past decade. The strongest rates of growth are expected for Hardy and Hampshire County, which are both expected to outpace the state overall. Indeed, relatively very strong growth of over 0.8 percent per year is expected in Hampshire County. The forecast was provided by S&P Global, Inc. through the WVU Bureau of Business and Economy Research.

# Section A:  Summary Background

## Introduction to the Region

Region 8 Planning and Development Council (PDC) serves five counties within the Potomac Highlands of West Virginia:  Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral and Pendleton. The PDC is charged with promoting sound development in those five counties and conducts a variety of economic development and planning activities. The region contains twelve municipalities ranging in size, three of the region's municipalities are Class III cities and nine are towns. Special purpose governments for counties/towns include development authorities, public service districts, planning commissions, urban renewal authorities, and housing authorities. Two other regional special purpose units of government are Region 8 Solid Waste Authority, which is responsible for planning to assure long-term solid waste disposal and the Potomac Valley Transit Authority, which provides local and long-distance bus service in the region.

The region is full of natural resources including coal, timber, agriculture, fish, and wildlife.  The area has led the state in deer and turkey harvesting, attracting hunters from areas two days or more driving distance away. Bear hunting is also popular within the region. Streams in the region are popular fishing areas supporting both cold and warm water fishing. Although a few cold-water streams support native trout populations, most trout fishing occurs in streams stocked by the WV Division of Natural Resources. This stocking of cold-water streams adds to the region's attractiveness to anglers.



North Branch of the Potomac River
*Photo courtesy of WV Department of Commerce*

A substantial portion of Grant, Hardy, and Pendleton Counties is contained in the George Washington and Monongahela National Forests. Within the National Forests are several national recreation areas, which bring man visitors to the area to enjoy hiking, canoeing, and camping. Other areas of importance are Nathaniel Mountain, Short Mountain, Springfield Wildlife Management Areas, and Lost River State Park. The region's forests, including their environmentally sensitive areas, support the wood products industry and play a critical role in supporting other industries such as tourism, horticulture, and the Christmas tree industry. Forests are also the main instrument to preserve the quality of air and water, which in turn facilitates people's daily activities.

Agriculture plays a vital role within the Potomac Highlands. The region contains over 2,700 farm operations, containing an average of 241 acres, and totals more than $400 million direct sales of agriculture products. Poultry production (broilers and layers) represent the single-largest source of farm activity in the area, particularly in Hardy County, which accounted for approximately 40 percent of all

broilers sold and a similar share of layer inventory. 25 percent of the state's agriculture is produced in Hardy County.

The oil and natural gas industry is rapidly expanding across West Virginia, although its development in the Potomac Highlands has been slower than in other areas of the state. Significant changes in land use are not expected.[1] The region also produces coal, wind energy, and electric power.

All five counties in the region are rural. All counties are in what is generally considered a mountainous region. As such, the potential for development is limited. The topography often drives development to flatter areas which are often in or near floodplains. Local floodplain development regulations carefully balance the needs for economic development and growth in the employment sector with a basic responsibility to buffer potential and existing businesses from the effects of hazards. Most of the commercial and industrial development in these counties is in or near the municipalities. Several development sites have been established along the primary roadways throughout the region.[2]

The U.S. Census Bureau reports an estimated 2020 population for the Potomac Highlands at 84,000. There are two Metropolitan Statistical Areas with component counties in the Potomac Highlands. Mineral County is one of the component counties of Cumberland, Maryland-West Virginia, and Metropolitan Statistical Areas along with Allegany County in Maryland. The other MSA is the Winchester, Virginia-West Virginia, and Metropolitan Statistical Areas, which is made up of Hampshire County, and Frederick County and Winchester City in Virginia. The inclusion of Mineral and Hampshire counties in their respective indicates the high degree of commuting flows between these counties and the core counties in other states. In each case, the core county (and thus the core city) of the MSA is located outside of West Virginia.

The following paragraphs provides a synopsis of each county including the towns and municipalities within their boundaries.

> **Grant County**:  The 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates reports an estimated population at 10,968. The survey also reports the median household income of $47,357 for the County. The survey also reports an estimated civilian labor force of 5,957 and 3.7% unemployed.

Grant County is located in the heart of the West Virginia's hardwood region, is a member of the WV Hardwood Alliance Zone, and is home to a robust hardwoods industry.  Grant County Mulch is headquartered in Grant County and have multiple locations throughout West Virginia and beyond.

> The county is home to two power plants managed by Dominion Power. Mount Storm Power Station has three units that generate 1,600 megawatts of electricity. A 1,200-acre lake, built to serve the station, also serves as a popular public recreation area. Grant County also has 100+ wind turbines that generate electricity making use of a consistent reliable westerly wind. Over fourteen miles of the Appalachian Development Highway System's Corridor H is open and runs along the eastern edge of Grant County.

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[1] Region 8 Planning and Development Council Hazard Mitigation Plan – 2012, page 31.
[2] Region 8 Planning and Development Council Hazard Mitigation Plan – 2012, page 26.

Dolly Sods Wilderness
*Photo courtesy WV Department of Commerce*

Grant County has seven historical sites and is home to four rare plant species. (See charts pages 26-32) Among the top ten employers in the County are Grant Memorial Hospital, Dominion Power, and Grant County Board of Education. The Grant County Housing Authority owns 73 rental units and manages 48. The county has a development authority and two public service districts. There are three industrial parks and two industrial buildings, and one multi-tenant office building.

**The Town of Bayard**: The 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates reports an estimated population at 263. The survey also reports the median household income of $26,250 for the town and an estimated civilian labor force of 123 and 4.9 % unemployed.

Water and sewer services for the Town are provided by the Mountain Top Public Service District.
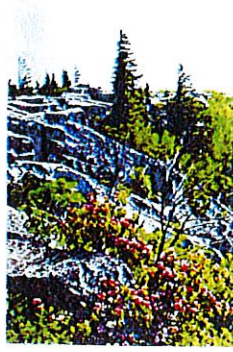
**The City of Petersburg**: The 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates reports an estimated population at 2,822. The survey also reports the median household income as $46,629 for the city and an estimated civilian labor force of 1,440 and 5.8 % unemployed.

Petersburg and Moorefield (Hardy County) have been identified jointly as a growth center for the Potomac Highlands. The Grant County Airport is located on the outskirts of the city, with a lighted runway of over 5,000 feet. The South Branch Valley Railroad provides regular service to the main east/west line of the CSX rail system.

Alleghany Wood Products (AWP) located in Petersburg is a 50- year-old internationally known producer of quality Appalachian hardwood lumber closed their doors on February 23, 2024. This devastating shutdown impacted 850 jobs in the state. AWP also had a large mill in Kingwood, WV and a fumigation facility in Moorefield, WV. This shutdown will have a detrimental effect on our region.

Grant Memorial Hospital is part of the West Virginia University Health System and is the state's largest health system which comprises 23 hospitals throughout West Virginia. Grant Memorial Hospital located in Petersburg serves the region with 25 licensed inpatient beds and 20 long term care beds. They have

recently added a new Infusion Cancer Center. The facility is supported by more than 370 employees and 57 Credentialed Physicians including full-time, part-time, ER, and telemedicine.

Petersburg completed a $11,000,000+ water system improvement project in 2013 to meet the Chesapeake Bay Standards. Grant County PSD is in the beginning stages of a water line extension project for the areas of Easton Carr Road, Knobley Road, and Jordan Run.

The Spring Mountain Festival during April and the Tri-County Fair during August are annual local events located in Petersburg that attract people from surrounding towns and states.

**Mon Forest Communities**

With almost one million acres, ten WV counties, and more than four hours of travel from top to bottom, the Monongahela National Forest touches many communities.

Petersburg is the eastern-most gateway to recreation adventure in the Mon Forest. Petersburg provides all the services needed to stock up and recuperate from your day of outdoor experience – enjoying the pristine mountain rivers, kayaking, canoeing, or fishing the riverbanks, climbing our spectacular cliffs, hiking and biking our amazing trails, driving the gorgeous mountain roads and soaring in the fresh mountain air.

Natural beauty and local hospitality are easy to find in the town of Franklin in Pendleton County. This small, charming town is in the Allegheny Mountains and is on the eastern side of the Monongahela National Forest, which is often the drier side of the forest. Some of the state's most spectacular scenery is nearby. Spruce Knob in the Monongahela National Forest is the highest point in West Virginia at 4,863 feet above sea level.

Today, approximately 1.3 million visitors come to the Monongahela National Forest each year. It is a place where visitors can enjoy breathtaking vistas, peaceful country roads, gently flowing streams, and glimpses of many plants and animals.

> **Hampshire County**: The 2018- 2022 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates reports an estimated population at 23,468. The survey also reports the median household income as $52,186 for the County. The survey also reports an estimated civilian labor force of 11,233 and 2.6% unemployed. Hampshire County is a part of the Winchester, VA-WV MSA.
>
> Hampshire County's largest employers include the Hampshire County Board of Education, West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind, and Valley Health System, Inc. Hampshire Memorial Hospital (a part of Valley Health System, Inc. which is located in Winchester, VA) serves the area with 14 acute care beds, 30 long term care beds and an emergency room.

Hampshire County Courthouse, Romney, WV
*Photo courtesy WV Department of Commerce*

U.S. Route 50 runs west/west through the County. South Branch Valley Railroad provides regular service to the main east/west line of the CSX rail system. The historic Potomac Eagle Scenic Railroad provides narrated excursions at various times throughout the year attracting tourists from several states.

The South Branch Valley Bluegrass Festival occurs in Hampshire County in June of each year and the Hampshire County Fair takes place each August. The County is home to three rare plant species and 20 historical places and sites. (See charts pages 26-32) Hampshire County also has a development authority and a public service district. There are two industrial parks, one industrial site, and a multi-tenant building.

**The Town of Romney:** The 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates reports an estimated population of 2,062. The survey also reports the median household income as $34,063 for the city and an estimated civilian labor force of 617 and 13.9% unemployed.

Romney is West Virginia's oldest town and identified as a growth center for the region. U. S. Route 50 serves as Romney's Main Street. Improvements have been made to Romney's water treatment plant. The city just completed a project to improve its water storage tanks and has finished a wastewater project to allow them to meet Chesapeake Bay Standards. Romney Housing Authority owns 60 units.

Romney is home to the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind. The annual West Virginia Peach Festival headquarters are in Romney and this event takes place in August.

**The Town of Capon Bridge:** The 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates reports an estimated population at 526. The survey also reports the median household income as $63,125 for the Town and an estimated civilian labor force of 234 and 2.1% unemployed.

U. S. Route 50 also serves as Main Street for Capon Bridge. The town completed a water improvement project that has replaced the old booster pump station and waterlines that required high maintenance in the system. The Founders Day Festival occurs annually during September.

**Hardy County:** The 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates reports an estimated population at 14,192. The survey also reports the median household income as $51,591 for the county with an estimated civilian labor force of 5,697 and 4.0% unemployed.
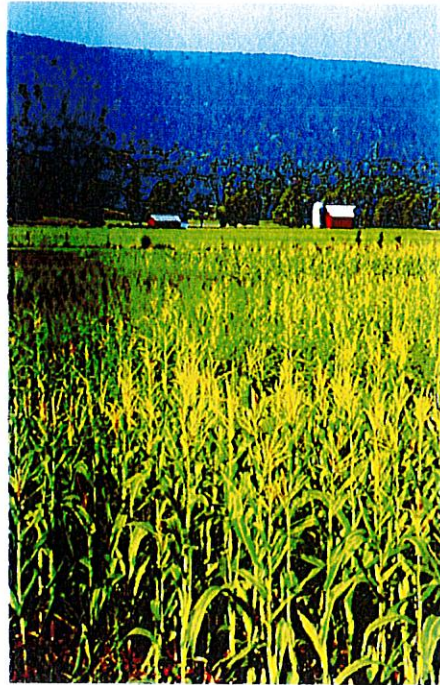


Farm in Hardy County, WV
*Photo courtesy of WV Department of Commerce*

Manufacturing and agriculture are the economic drivers for Hardy County. Pilgrim's Pride, American Woodmark, and Hardy County Board of Education are the top employers in the county. The National Agricultural Statistics Service of the United States Department of Agriculture has identified Hardy County as first among West Virginia's 55 counties in terms of total value of agricultural products sold, value of livestock, poultry, and their products. Approximately 34 miles of the Appalachian Development Highway System's Corridor H runs along the northern edge of Hardy County. The South Branch Valley Railroad provides regular service to the main east/west line of the CSX rail system.

Hardy County has 25 historical places and sites and is home to three rare plant species. (See charts page 26-32) The county has a development authority and a public service district. There are four industrial parks, one industrial site, and one building in the county. Annual local events attracting many people from surrounding towns and states are the West Virginia Poultry Association's Poultry Festival in July and Hardy County Heritage Weekend in September.

**The Town of Moorefield:** The 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates reports an estimated population at 2,846. The survey also reports the median household income of $59,966 for the Town and an estimated civilian labor force of 1,490 and 4.6% unemployed.

Moorefield and Petersburg (Grant County) have been identified jointly as a growth center for the Potomac Highlands. Pilgrim's Pride, the second largest chicken producer in the world, operates a feed mill, fresh plant, and a prepared food cook plant in Hardy County. American Woodmark Corporation, a leading manufacturing and distributor of kitchen and bath cabinets for remodeling and new home construction, also has a manufacturing facility in the county. Employees for these facilities travel from other counties and states.

Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical Center is in Moorefield and offers 12-degree programs as well as numerous skills sets and certificates.

A partnership between the town, Pilgrim's Pride, Caledonia Heights Subdivision, and Hardy County Rural Development Authority built a $40 million sewer treatment system that meets the Chesapeake Bay Standards.

Moorefield has an excellent water treatment facility that has been upgraded and enlarged many times to accommodate industry growth.

### The Town of Wardensville:

The 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates reports an estimated population at 379. The survey also reports the median household income as $39,688 for the town and an estimated civilian labor force of 162 and 9.3% unemployed.

Wardensville is a gateway for those heading west from much of Northern Virginia. Visitors from the D.C. Metropolitan area have purchased second homes in and around the town. The town manages its own water and sewer treatment facilities. Wardensville is home to Trout Pond which is the largest natural lake in West Virginia.

### Mineral County:

The 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates reports an estimated population at 26,855. The survey also reports the median household income of $54,960 for the County and an estimated civilian labor force of 12,526 and 3.8% unemployed. Mineral County is included in the Cumberland, MD-WV MSA.



Jennings Randolph Lake, Mineral County, WV
*Photo courtesy of WV Department of Commerce*

Mineral County offers a diversified industrial output. The major manufacturers include propulsion units, lumber, kitchen equipment, packaging, mineral fabrication, and limestone. Alliant Techsystems, Inc. (ATK), Mineral County Board of Education, and IBM Corporation are among the top employers. ATK is a U.S. Navy-owned facility specializing in advanced manufacturing technologies for various programs supporting current and future U.S. industrial base needs in conventional munitions assemblies, advanced electronic fuzing and integration, solid rocket motor propulsion, and advanced material structures. In 2019, Northrop Grumman's expansion to ATK has recently created 200 additional jobs in Mineral County and is expected to create more over the next five years. Farming and agriculture also contribute to the economy. Mineral County also has a small wind farm with turbines that generate electricity making use of a consistent reliable westerly wind.

Potomac Valley Hospital strives to provide quality, efficient and cost-effective health care to Mineral County and surrounding area, utilizing both direct services and collaborative arrangements with other health care organizations. Potomac Valley Hospital is part of the West Virginia University Health System and is the state's largest health system which comprises 23 hospitals throughout West Virginia. Potomac Valley Hospital is a 25 bed, critical access medical facility employing over 200 area residents and extending privilege to approximately 50 physicians, and one general surgeon. There is also a rotating staff of physicians specializing in emergency medicine who reside on the premises.

The CSX rail lines run along the Potomac River on the northern border of the county. Amtrak service is available nearby in Cumberland, MD. Major highways within the county include U.S. Route 50, U.S. Route 220, WV Route 28, 42, 49, 93 and 956.

Mineral County is home to two rare plant species and 11 historical places and sites. (See charts page 26-32) The county has a development authority, three public service districts, and one water association. There are two industrial parks and one multi-tenant building. The Mineral County Fair takes place in July and attracts many visitors to the area. Jennings Randolph Lake offers extensive recreational opportunity with its 952 acres and more than 13 miles of shoreline. Improvements were made in the Fountain Public Service District water system to provide potable water service to additional customers including state route 46/Cabin Run, county Route 9, Knobley Road North, Dry Run Road, Antioch/Parrill Hollow, Patterson Creek South, Shirley's Lane, Rogers Road and Bevers Run.

> The City of Keyser:   The 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates reports an estimated population at 4,879. The survey also reports the median household income of $46,724 for the city and an estimated civilian labor force of 2,194 and 6.0% unemployed.
>
> Keyser has previously been designated a Redevelopment – Economic Center by the Economic Development Administration. The city has also been identified as a growth center within the region. It is the largest city in the region. A robust growth in the New Creek Valley, south of Keyser, has required doubling of connections to the New Creek water system. Water plant improvements are progressing. The city recently completed a sewer improvement project and now meets Chesapeake Bay Standards.

The city is home to Potomac State College (PSC), a division of West Virginia University. The college offers two-year fast track career and technical programs that prepare students for competitive jobs in areas including Hospitality and Tourism, Criminal Justice, and Equine Production and Management. PSC also offers a four-year degree with emphasis on Business Management, Criminal Justice, and Nursing. Mineral County Vocational Technical Center works closely with the business community. Youth and adults can train for specific needs, including industrial and office skills. The Mineral County school system offers an excellent school-to-work program that prepares students for careers in the area. The Keyser Housing Authority owns 85 units and manages 203 units throughout Mineral, Hampshire, and Hardy Counties.

**The City of Piedmont**: The 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates reports an estimated population at 997. The survey also reports the median household income as $62,750 for the city and an estimated civilian labor force of 581 and 8.4% unemployed.

Piedmont is in the northern end of Mineral County along the southern shore of the Potomac River. It is characterized by a flat downtown area and very steep side-hill slopes that have been developed as residential.

Piedmont is a part of an area known as Tri-Towns. This is a small complex of three incorporated towns which include Piedmont, West Virginia, Luke and Westernport, Maryland. These three towns are closely related to each other in many respects due to their proximity to one another. For instance, economic functions, such as the workplace and shopping facilities are conducted outside of Piedmont.

The city is near, but not on a major federal highway so it is not closely linked to any major city; however, it is within a day's drive of several cities. Cumberland, Maryland and Keyser, West Virginia are within a half hour drive of the Tri-Towns area. Commercial air and rail service are available at Cumberland, Maryland. On June 30, 2019, Luke paper mill, located in Luke, Maryland shut down. It was the largest employer in the area. The original main line of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, which connected Baltimore, MD and the Ohio River at Wheeling, WV, is still a major segment of the CSX Transportation system and runs through Piedmont.

The City has an active housing authority with 99 housing units for lower-income households. In 2018, the City completed a water system upgrade to the water plant facility and recently finished construction of a sewer improvement project that consisted of a total system upgrade.

**The Town of Ridgeley**:   The 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates reports an estimated population of 386. The survey also reports the median household income as $30,893 for the Town and an estimated civilian labor force of 181 and 5.5% unemployed.

Ridgeley is located along the North Branch of the Potomac River opposite Cumberland, Maryland. A good transportation network serves Ridgeley. It is near the CSX terminal

that provides direct access to the main east/west route of the CSX system. Amtrak service is two miles away in Cumberland, Maryland and provides daily rail service. The town has access to Interstate 68 within two miles. U.S. Route 220 and WV Route 28 are also close by.

The Town of Ridgeley purchases its water from Cumberland, Maryland. The Town is responsible for line maintenance. Ridgeley sends its sewage to Cumberland, Maryland.

**The Town of Carpendale:** The 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates reports an estimated population as 1,256. The survey also reports the median household income as $65,938 for the town and an estimated civilian labor force of 661 and 8.9% unemployed.

Carpendale is the region's youngest municipality, incorporated on January 2, 1990. Amtrak service is two miles away in Cumberland, Maryland and provides daily rail service. The CSX terminal is also close by and allows direct access to the main east/west route of the CSX system. The town has access to a charter freight flights The town has access to Interstate 68 within two miles. U.S. Route 220 and WV Route 28 are also nearby.

The town's water system is new and provides more than adequate water for the town. The town's sewage is sent to Cumberland, Maryland.

**The Town of Elk Garden:** The 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates reports an estimated population at 196. The survey also reports the median household income of $78,750 for the town and an estimated civilian labor force of 81 and 2.5% unemployed.

Elk Garden's water and sewer is provided by the Mountain Top Public Service District (Grant County). The PSD recently enlarged some supply lines within the town to enable the installation of fire hydrants, giving the town better fire protection.

**Pendleton County:** The 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates reports an estimated population at 6,011. The survey also reports the median household income of $48,035 for the county and an estimated civilian labor force of 3,826 and 2.6% unemployed.

Pendleton County's east, west, and south borders are marked by the headwaters of the South Branch of the Potomac River. The two national forests in Pendleton County, the George Washington and Monongahela, encompass over 130,000 acres of the county. More than 185 miles of trails are available for hiking and biking and range from pavement to forest road to off-road trekking. The county is home to nine rare species and has 14 historical places and sites. (See charts Page 26-32)

View from Spruce Knob, Pendleton County, WV
*Photo courtesy of WV Department of Commerce*

Pendleton County's largest employers include the Pendleton County Board of Education and Pendleton Manor, Inc. Pendleton County has a development authority and a public service district. There is one industrial park and three buildings. All roads leading to and through the county are two-lane highways. Those include U.S. Route 33 and 220 as well as WV Route 28 and 55. Direct rail or air service does not exist in the county. The Sugar Grove Naval Base closed in 2015 and in October 2019, the Department of Defense Adjustment Strategy was completed. This plan was developed to better understand and address adverse economic impacts, evaluate a variety of ways to respond to the closure, and redevelopment challenges to identify resource requirements relating to the closure of the Sugar Grove Naval Base.

**The Town of Franklin:** The 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates reports an estimated population at 495. The survey also reports the median household income of $78,125 for the town and an estimated civilian labor force of 244 and 0.0% unemployed.

Franklin has its own water and sewer treatment facilities. Currently the sewer lagoon system is being upgraded with a new liner rake system and new lines within the community to reduce inflow and infiltration. The town's water system was recently upgraded. It provides water not only to the town, but also to the Pendleton County Public Service District customers.

The Treasure Mountain Festival takes place in Franklin. It is held each year in September to remember the early settlers who escaped an attack by Killbuck and a band of Shawnee Indians and to celebrate the treasures around the area. Spring Fest occurs yearly in May.

## The Physical Environment

### Land Use

As with most rural areas, agricultural and forest land compose much of the region's acreage. Remaining uses, including urban land, barren land, and water account for less than 2% of all acreage. Industrial, commercial, and housing development primarily occurs in and near the region's municipalities. Industrial growth is centered around the region's industrial parks. An increasing

number of vacation homes and summer cottages are being constructed in forest and agricultural areas.

It has been estimated that less than 4.0% of the region's land is suitable for future development. Taking the region's growth rate into consideration, sufficient land exists for development for the foreseeable future. However, proper land use management must take place if the land is to be used to its fullest potential and if conflict is to be minimized.

## Physiographic and Topographic Features

The five counties in Region 8 are all contained within the headwaters of the Potomac River Basin. The eastern part of the region is underlain by folded and faulted strata of the Valley and Ridge physiographic provinces, and the western part is underlain by flat-lying strata of the strongly dissected Appalachian Plateaus physiographic province.  In the Valley and Ridge province, the eroded edges of the folded strata crop out in thin, lineal, parallel belts that range in age from Cambrian to Devonian. The Appalachian Plateaus are characterized by gently dipping sandstones, shales, and limestones ranging in age from Devonian to Pennsylvanian.

The topography of the region is rugged. The major mountain ranges have a north-south alignment, and the major streams flow from south to north or northeast.

## Soils

The region can be divided into two major soil areas. They are the Ridge and Valley area in the central and eastern portion of the region, and the Allegheny Plateau in the extreme western part of the region.

The gently sloping to very steep soils of the Ridge and Valley areas are moderately coarse to moderately fine textured. Some areas are rocky or stony. These soils are formed in materials weathered primarily from shale, siltstone, sandstone, and some limestone. There is some farming in the valleys and on the low ridges, but most of the soil is better suited to woodland uses.

The gently sloping to moderately steep soils of the Allegheny Plateau are moderately deep, well drained, and medium or moderately coarse textured. These soils are formed in materials weathered primarily from acid shale, siltstone, and sandstone. Some farming is done on the more gentle slopes, but most of the soil is better suited to woodland uses.

Small areas of level and gently sloping soils occur throughout the basin on the floodplains and river terraces. These soils are deep, well, moderately well, or poorly drained; and medium or moderately coarse textured. They formed in acid or lime-influenced material washed from soils of the uplands. This soil constitutes a small portion of the basin but is significant for agricultural and urban uses. Approximately 60,000 acres of this area are considered prime agricultural land. The importance of these soils makes their protection vital. Actively used prime agricultural land often provides a buffer to many key environmental assets, especially the region's streams and rivers. It also adds to the scenic value of the region, making it more attractive to tourists. Unfortunately, the region has experienced increasing rates of conversion to other uses.

## Water

A large portion of the developable land in Region 8 is located along the North and South Branches of the Potomac River.  Over 100,000 acres of this area is designated as being in the 100-year

floodplain. Major tributaries in the Potomac River Basin include the Lost/Cacapon River, North River, Patterson Creek, and Stoney River. The region contains West Virginia's only natural lake, Trout Pond, and the 1,200-acre Mount Storm Lake. The region shares the 952-acre Jennings Randolph Lake with Garrett County, Maryland. There are more than 60 Soil Conservation Service impoundments in the region. While the quality of streams and rivers is not ideal, except for the North Branch of the Potomac River and waters in the Mountain Top area, water quality is good. Increasing concern has been expressed over agricultural waste entering the region's streams and rivers. Surface streams serve as water sources for the communities of Petersburg, Moorefield, Romney, Fort Ashby, Keyser, and Upper Tract. Additionally, the region's rivers support many recreational opportunities including valuable fisheries. Jennings Randolph Lake was constructed in part to provide recreational opportunities. The Mountain Top area and the North Branch of the Potomac River suffer from the adverse impacts of coal mining. Additionally, Mount Storm Lake suffers from thermal pollution. Obviously, water quality demands scrutiny and an effort by all individuals to reserve a high standard.

Segments of the South Branch of the Potomac, the North Fork of the South Branch of the Potomac, and Seneca Creek have been evaluated as potential "Wild and Scenic Rivers." Ten miles of the South Branch (Jake Hill Bridge to Big Bend Campground) has been classified as recreational; nine miles (Big Bend Recreation Area to the Canyon Exit) has been identified as scenic; and an additional three miles (downstream from the canyon) have also been identified as recreational. Slightly more than three miles of the North Fork of the South Branch of the Potomac (High Ridge Run to the outskirts of Hopeville) has been identified as scenic. Eight miles of Seneca Creek (Trussel Run to the Falls) has been identified as wild; and five miles (Falls to the National Recreation Boundary) has been identified as recreational. In general, these segments have been determined to be free-flowing and possess at least one outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or another feature. Significant local concerns exist as to the impact of designating these stream segments as wild and scenic. Concern is particularly high over the region's ability to fully capitalize on the streams ability to attract tourists. Additional concerns are related to increased federal control of a local natural feature. It should be noted that similar concerns resulted in a determination that the Cacapon/Lost River was not suitable for inclusion as a scenic river.

Subsurface water is available over the entire district; however, in some areas, water can only be found at extreme depths. About half of the region's subsurface water is useable for domestic purposes. Undesirable characteristics in the other half include low pH, high iron, hardness, nitrate, chloride, or sulfate content. Subsurface sources support many of the region's smaller water systems and all the individual systems. Recent droughts have lowered both the quantity and quality of subsurface water. More alarming are instances of pollution that have included both pesticides and oil entering wells used for drinking water.

Region 8 has a small number of natural wetlands, with the majority of these being utilized in some type of agricultural activity.

## Natural, Scenic and Forested Areas

Region 8 has many natural and scenic areas. A sizable portion of Grant, Hardy and Pendleton Counties is contained in the George Washington and Monongahela National Forests; included in the National Forests are several National Recreation Areas. Other areas of importance are Nathaniel Mountain, Short Mountain, Springfield Wildlife Management Areas, and Lost River State Park.

Forested areas cover over three-fourths of the region. Approximately 88% of the commercial forest land is held by private ownership including railroads and mining companies. Seven percent of this ownership is in the National Forests. The main forest type in the region is Oak-Hickory (70%) and Oak-Pine (80%). Pendleton County is the largest forested county with 78% of its area in forest. About 60% of the forest land is saw-timber size class. Saw logs are of average quality. Pole timber accounts for about 30% of forest land. Most low-grade oak goes into pallet stock or dunnage. Both hard and soft wood pulp wood are in demand over most of the area. The region's forests have been threatened by oak decline or die back and the gypsy moth. Considerable effort has gone into addressing the gypsy moth threat. It should be noted that woodland improvement is a long-range process with the rotation age for hard wood saw timber being between 100 and 150 years.

The region's forests, including their environmentally sensitive areas, provide the base for the region's tourist industry. As the region develops, more and more encroachments in these areas are occurring. Thus, it is of prime importance that these areas be identified and protected. However, this protection should take the region's long run development needs into account and should not prevent development to protect areas which are merely interesting as opposed to being truly unique.

## Wildlife and Fisheries

One of the region's most important natural resources is its wildlife and fish. Many game species provide not only local sportsman with leisure diversion but also attract large numbers of people from surrounding urban areas. There is a wide assortment of both game and non-game species of birds, mammals, reptiles, and fish to be studied by non-consumptive outdoor enthusiasts.

The area has led the state in deer and turkey harvesting, attracting hunters from areas two days or more driving distance away. Other important game species are squirrels, rabbits, grouse, quail, dove, woodcock, and raccoon. Bears are also hunted. Waterfowl are not plentiful, but are found in numbers sufficient to attract hunters. Some fur bearing mammals are found and trapped. The region's low population density contributes to the relatively high wildlife population.

The region's streams are popular fishing areas supporting both cold and warm water fishing. Warm water species include small mouth bass, large-mouth bass, rock bass, bluegills, sunfish, and catfish. Although a few cold-water streams support native trout populations, most trout fishing occurs in streams stocked by the Division of Natural Resources. This stocking of cold-water streams greatly adds to the region's attractiveness to anglers.

## Environmentally Sensitive Areas, Endangered Species and Historic Sites

There are about eight areas in the region designated as environmentally sensitive. This includes breeding grounds for native wildlife, wilderness areas, recreational areas, and underground cavern sites.

The region contains ten plants that are identified by the federal government as a rare species. Tables 7 and 8 on the following pages provide a listing of rare species and those that are federally threatened and endangered. Federally listed plants include Shale Barren Rockcress and Canby's Mountain Lover. Rare plants, as identified by the state, include those associated with plants of rock cliffs including the Silvery Nailwort in Grant, Hardy, and Pendleton Counties, the Virginia Nailwort found along the South Branch of the Potomac River, Fameflower found in Hampshire County,

Michaux's Saxifrage found in Pendleton County, Crested Coralroot found at Smoke Hole in Pendleton County, and Tall Larkspur found in Hampshire County. Plants related to shale barrens such as the Shale Pussytoes are found at Hanging Rock in Hampshire County.

Endangered or threatened wildlife includes several species of bats and several species of mussels. Other protected species include Northern Flying Squirrels, the Eastern Cougar, and the Cheat Mountain Salamander. The Peregrine Falcon and Bald Eagle have both been removed from the list as noted on the following page and the WV Department of Natural Resources website.

**Table #2**

**Title: Rare Species – Federal List**

RARE SPECIES – FEDERAL LIST

| Grant County | | | General Location |
|---|---|---|---|
| C2 | Cooper Milkvetch | Plant | Cave Mountain |
| C2 | Smoke Hole Bergamot | Plant | Cave Mountain |
| C2 | Canby's Mountain-Lover | Plant | Cave Mountain |
| C2 | Virginia Nail-Wort | Plant | Cave Mountain |
| | | | |
| Hampshire County | | | |
| C2 | Tall Larkspur | Plant | Forks of Cacapon |
| C2 | Canby's Mountain-Lover | Plant | Yellow Springs |
| C2 | Virginia Nail-Wort | Plant | Millesons Mill |
| | | | |
| Hardy County | | | |
| LE | Shale Barren Rockcress | Plant | Rohrbaugh Plains |
| C2 | Tall Larkspur | Plant | Getz Mountain |
| C2 | Virginia Nail-Wort | Plant | Stump Knob |
| | | | |
| Mineral County | | | |
| C2 | Tall Larkspur | Plant | Knobley Mountain, Keyser Reservoir |
| C2 | Canby's Mountain Lover | Plant | Cave Mountain |
| Pendleton County | | | |
| LE | Shale Barren Rockcress | Plant | Stony Run, Brandywine, Sugar Grove |
| C2 | Cooper Milkvetch | Plant | Cave Mountain |
| C2 | Variable Sedge | Plant | North Fork Mountain near Harper & Brush Mountain |
| C2 | Tall Larkspur | Plant | Friends Run and Smoke Hole Gorge |
| C2 | One-Flowered Rush | Plant | North Fork Mountain |
| C2 | Smoke Hole Bergamot | Plant | Cave Mountain |
| LE | Indiana or Social Myotis | Animal | Germany Valley, Cave Mountain., Cave Knob, Neds Mt |
| C2 | Canby's Mountain-Lover | Plant | Circleville, Smoke Hole |
| C2 | Virginia Nail-Wort | Plant | Cave Mountain |

Fed: LE = Endangered   LT = Threatened C = Candidate PDL = Proposed for delisting

Table #3
Federally Threatened and Endangered Species in West Virginia

| Indiana bat | Myotis sodalis | 1967 |
|---|---|---|
| gray bat (accidental) | Myotis grisescens | 1976 |
| Pink mucket pearlymussel | Lampsilis abrupta | 1976 |
| Virginia big-eared bat | Corynorhinus townsendii virginianus | 1979 |
| harperella | Ptilimnium nodosum | 1988 |
| shale barren rockcress | Arabis serotina | 1989 |
| fanshell | Cyprogenia stegaria | 1990 |
| purple cat's paw pearlymussel | Epioblasma obliquata obliquata | 1990 |
| northeastern bulrush | Scirpus ancistrochaetus | 1991 |
| northern riffleshell | Epioblasma torulosa rangiana | 1993 |
| clubshell | Pleurobema clava | 1993 |
| James spinymussel | Pleurobema collina | 1998 |
| snuffbox | Epioblasma triquetra | 2012 |
| rayed bean | Villosa fabalis | 2012 |
| spectaclecase | Cumberlandia monodonta | 2012 |
| sheepnose | Plethobasus cyphyus | 2012 |
| Diamond Darter | Crystallaria cincotta | 2013 |
| Guyandotte River crayfish | Cambarus veteranus | 2016 |
| rusty patched bumble bee | Bombus affinis | 2017 |
| Candy Darter | Etheostoma osburni | 2018 |
| northern long-eared bat * | Myotis septentrionalis | 2022 |

| | | Critical Habitat | 4(d) rule | Year Listed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| flat-spired three-toothed land snail | Triodopsis platysayoides | | | 1978 |
| madison cave isopod | Antrolana lira | . | | 1982 |
| small whorled pogonia | Isotria medeoloides | | | 1982 |
| Cheat Mountain salamander | Plethodon nettingi | | | 1989 |
| Virginia spiraea | Spiraea virginiana | | | 1990 |
| Big Sandy crayfish | Cambarus callainus | Y | | 2016 |
| eastern black rail (accidental) | Laterallus jamaicensis jamaicensis | | Y | 2020 |

| | | Critical Habitat | Status | Year |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| round hickorynut | Obovaria subrotunda | Y | Thr. | 2020 |
| longsolid | Fusconaia subrotunda | Y | Thr. | 2020 |
| tricolored bat | Perimyotis subflavus | N | End. | 2022 |

* Proposed Change; currently threatened

www.wvdnr.gov/Wildlife/PDFFiles/TElist.pdf

Approximately 76 historic sites are located in Region 8.  Many of these are old homesteads and forts dating back to colonial times.  There are also several antebellum plantations and Civil War sites in the region. Several counties have their courthouses or other government buildings on the National Register of Historic Places.  The Towns of Moorefield and Franklin both contain federally designated historic districts that date to Colonial Virginia. Burlington in Mineral County, Old Fields, as well as New Deal in Lost River State Park which both are located in Hardy County and North River Mills in Hampshire County are designated as historic districts.  These districts serve to preserve a concentration of assets that have attracted numerous tourists to the area. In addition to historic sites, archaeological investigations have found numerous pre-Columbian Native American sites. Among these is an Indian burial mound near the town of Romney.

## Table #4

### HISTORICAL PLACES AND SITES IN THE POTOMAC HIGHLANDS

| SITE | LOCATION | COUNTY |
|---|---|---|
| Gormania Presbyterian Church | Mabis Avenue, Gormania, WV | Grant |
| Noah Snyder Farm | 1.5 miles South of Lahmansville, WV | Grant |
| Hermitage Motor Inn | 203 Virginia Avenue, Petersburg, WV | Grant |
| Grant County Courthouse | Virginia Avenue, Petersburg, WV | Grant |
| The Manor (Peter and Jesse Hutton Farm) | North of Petersburg, WV on SR 42 | Grant |
| Rohrbaugh Cabin (Allegheny Cabin) | Smokehole Road, Monongahela National Forest | Grant |
| Fairfax Stone Site | North of William, WV | Grant |
| Capon Springs | 10 miles North of Wardensville, WV | Hampshire |
| Captain David Pugh House | Route 14 at Route 23/4 | Hampshire |
| Sloan-Parker House | East of Junction, WV on U. S. Route 50 | Hampshire |
| Wilson-Woodrow-Mytinger House | 51 W. Gravel Lane, Romney, WV | Hampshire |
| Literary Hall | Main and High Streets, Romney, WV | Hampshire |
| Old District Parsonage | 351 N. High Street, Romney, WV | Hampshire |
| Hampshire County Courthouse | 66 N. High Street, Romney, WV | Hampshire |
| Kuykendall Polygonal Barn | River Road, Romney, WV | Hampshire |
| Sycamore Dale (Gibson-Wirgman-Williams House) | County Route 8 | Hampshire |
| Washington Bottom Farm | WV Route 28 | Hampshire |
| Scanion Farm (Scanion Log House) | Three Churches Run Road | Hampshire |
| Capon Chapel | Christian Church Road, Capon Bridge, WV | Hampshire |
| Fort VanMeter | River Road, Romney, WV | Hampshire |
| Hickory Grove | County Route 8, 1 mile South of U.S. Route 50 | Hampshire |
| Hooks Tavern | Junction of U.S. Route 50 & Smokey Hollow Rd, Capon Bridge, WV | Hampshire |
| North River Mills Historic District | Junction of County Roads 45/20 and 4/2, North River | Hampshire |
| Old Pine Church | Old Pine Church Road, Purgitsville, WV | Hampshire |
| South Branch Bridge | WV 259 North of Junction on U.S. Route 50, Junction, WV | Hampshire |
| Springfield Brick House | 12 Market Street, Springfield, WV | Hampshire |
| Valley View | Depot Valley Road, Romney, WV | Hampshire |
| Henry Funkhouser Farm and Log House | Funkhouser Road | Hardy |
| Lost River General Store | 6993 WV Route 259 | Hardy |
| John Mathias House | SR 259 | Hardy |
| "Lighthorse Harry" Lee Cabin | West of Mathias in Lost River State Park | Hardy |
| Oakland Hall | U. S. Route 220 | Hardy |
| Westfall Place | U. S. Route 220 | Hardy |
| The Willows (Randolph House) | South of Moorefield, WV | Hardy |
| Willow Wall (McNeil Family House) | South of Moorefield, WV | Hardy |
| Table #4 continued | | |

| Wilson-Kuykendall Farm | U. S. Route 220 | Hardy |
|---|---|---|
| Stump Family Farm | SR 7 | Hardy |
| Garrett VanMeter House | Reynolds Gap Road | Hardy |
| Burlington Historic District | SR 11 South from Junction, WV U.S. Routes 50/220 | Mineral |
| Carskadon House (Locust Hill) | Beaver Run Road | Mineral |
| Fairview (Peerce House) | Patterson Creek and Russelldale Road | Mineral |
| Fort Hill Farm | Patterson Creek Road | Mineral |
| Travelers Rest | 1 mile East of Ridgeville on U. S. Route 50 | Mineral |
| Fort Ashby | South Street | Mineral |
| Thomas R. Carskadon House | Carskadon Road, Keyser, WV | Mineral |
| Mineral County Courthouse | 150 Armstrong Street, Keyser, WV | Mineral |
| Vandiver-Hull-Trout-Clause House | U. S. Routes 50/220 | Mineral |
| Stewarts Tavern | Short Gap Road | Mineral |
| Henry Gassaway Davis House | 15-17 Jones Street, Piedmont, WV | Mineral |
| Old Propst Church | CR 21/9 | Pendleton |
| Circleville School | SR 28 | Pendleton |
| McCoy House | Main Street, Franklin, WV | Pendleton |
| Franklin Historic District | U. S. Route 33, Main Street and High Street, Franklin, WV | Pendleton |
| Priest Mill | U.S. Route 220 | Pendleton |
| Old Judy Church | 10 miles South of Petersburg, WV on U. S. Route 220 | Pendleton |
| Sites Homestead | Seneca Rocks Visitor Center | Pendleton |
| Boggs Mill | U. S. Route 33/SR 28 South of junction with CR 9 | Pendleton |
| Bowers House | Brandywine – Sugar Grove Road | Pendleton |
| Cunningham-Hevener House | U. S. Route 220 | Pendleton |
| Pendleton County Poor Farm | U. S. Route 220 | Pendleton |
| McCoy Mill | Johnstown Road, Franklin, WV | Pendleton |
| Old Propst Church | 10 miles South of Petersburg on U. S. Route 220 | Pendleton |
| Ananias Pitsenbarger Farm | CR 23/1 Franklin, WV | Pendleton |
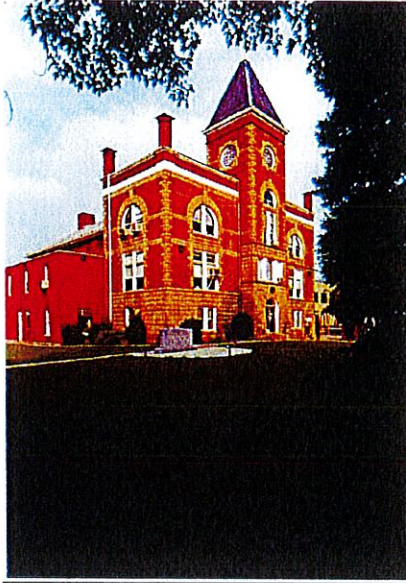
*Mineral County Courthouse, Keyser, WV*
*Photo courtesy of WV Department of Commerce* Mineral Resources

Since 1883 coal has been produced along the western edge of Grant and Mineral Counties in the Allegheny Plateau. Both deep and surface mining extraction methods are used. In 2021 coal production in Grant County was 25,681 underground tonnage and with 5 employees. Mineral County produced 0 surface tonnage with 5 employees. Coal has an average content of sulfur (1.92%) and ash (9.9%).

High quality limestones are found throughout the region. There are quarries in operation in all counties. Pendleton County produces rock aggregate, cement, rock dust, and agricultural lime. Little expansion of this industry is expected since present production meets market demands.

Some gas reserves are available within Region 8. However, the quantity of gas being extracted from these reserves has only minor impact upon development.

Other mineral deposits found in the region are sandstone, sand, clay, and iron ore. These materials are not being extensively mined.

### Wind

As the nation examines its energy policy, the use of wind to generate electricity becomes important. The Allegheny Plateau in the western Potomac Highlands is an ideal location for harvesting wind for power production. The U. S. Department of Energy identifies this area as outstanding for wind power. Portions of the eastern Potomac Highlands are also identified as outstanding. The region has seen the development of a wind farm with over 100 turbines to make use of a consistent reliable westerly wind near Mount Storm in Grant County. A smaller farm is proposed at a nearby site in Mineral County. While these projects have enjoyed public support, project sponsors abandoned a proposed project in Pendleton County that was met with substantial public resistance. This indicates a reduced ability to develop the eastern portion of the Region's wind potential.

## Location

In a dynamic economy a location central to market areas can be a major asset. Other factors such as labor, transportation facilities, and industrial sites must be available, but the factor of location can be so important as to create economic potential. Labor, materials, and financing can be drawn into an area and sites, service, and improvements made available, if new enterprises can be attracted to the region on the strength of its excellent location.

Industries are becoming increasingly market oriented and accessibility to markets is becoming more important as the cost of transportation rises. While some industries are heavily resource oriented, an examination of the location of concentrations of industry will show an increasing cluster of plants around areas of demand.

Even a cursory examination of the map below makes the advantage of Region 8 very apparent. The communities of the region are within a day's driving time of most major metropolitan areas of the east. This locational aspect is important to Region 8; however, if the communities of the region are to benefit from their location, marketing of this aspect must take place. Transportation improvements are also vital if the region's location is to be exploited for industrial purposes. However, it should be noted that the region's poor transportation network and lack of linkages to nearby metropolitan areas, has promoted features of great interest to tourists. Thus, the region's location should be seen as a major asset to the travel and tourism industry without transportation restrictions.

Map # 2

Close Window



West Virginia County Map
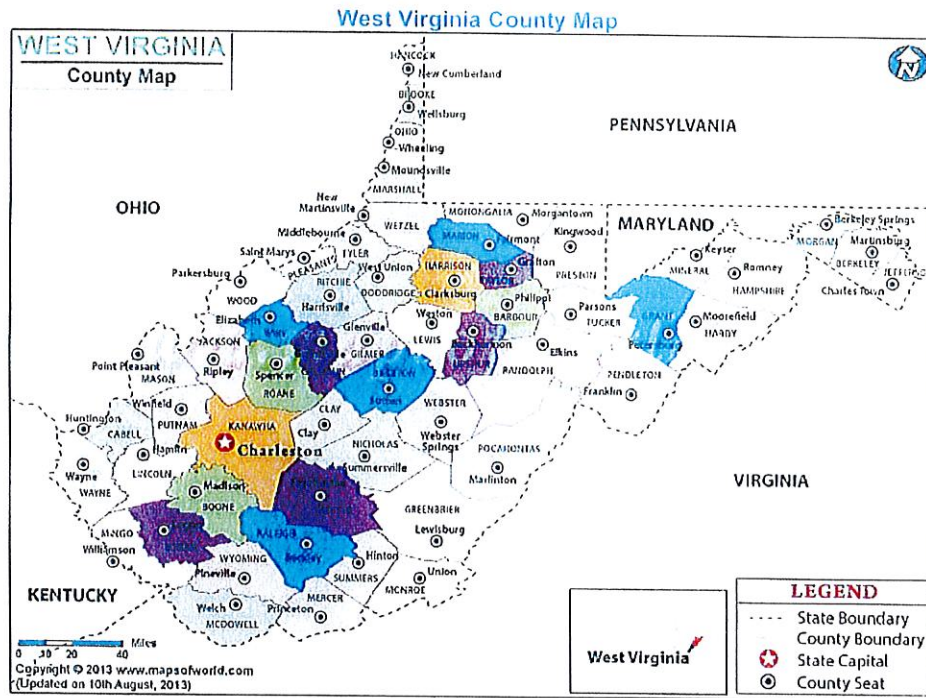
## Waste Disposal Sites

The region has no active landfills. The Region 8 Solid Waste Authority (SWA) closed landfills near Petersburg, Romney, Franklin, and Rig in Hardy County. The authority operates solid waste transfer stations at Petersburg and Romney. The SWA hauls waste from the stations to the Tucker County landfill. Several solid waste collectors haul directly to the Tucker County site or to a landfill located near Frostburg, Maryland. The Hardy County Commission has expressed strong interest in constructing a landfill to serve Hardy County's growing population and industry.

Fourteen wastewater treatment plants are operated by public bodies within the region. These plants have capacities from 21,500 to 2,100,000 gallons per day. These systems discharge approximately 3,000,000 per day. It should be noted that all systems provide secondary treatment. The following streams receive sewage effluent: Lunice Creek, Cacapon River, Shawn Run, Big Run, Dumpling Run, South Fork of the Potomac River, South Branch of the Potomac, Patterson Creek, and the North Branch of the Potomac.

Only the Allegany Ballistics Laboratory at Short Gap in Mineral County was identified as the most recent Environmental Protection Agency CERCLIS Site List. This occurred May 31, 1994. No other sites have been identified in the region.

# Infrastructure

## Industrial Parks, Sites and Buildings

Region 8 has ten industrial parks; these industrial parks contain over 1200 acres with 749 of these acres still unoccupied and available for development. The region's industrial parks contain 25 firms that employ about 1400 people. The success of local development authorities in marketing existing industrial parks has made these parks an essential element in achieving growth. Table 5 provides details on the region's industrial parks.

Although the region, at first glance, would appear to contain much developable land, many restrictions prohibit development. While water service is widely available, sewer service is relatively limited. Further, floodplains remove much land for consideration as industrial sites. Finally, the suitable land that exists has not been identified and most likely, is not on the market. The region has four industrial sites that include Royce Saville Site in Hampshire County and Fitzwater, Fisher, and Crites Sites in Hardy County. The Keyser CSX Railyard, an approximate 40-acre brownfield site with utilities and rail service is available for development.

The region contains several buildings suitable for industrial use. Local governments used EDA funds to construct multi-tenant buildings in Grant

, Hampshire, Mineral, and Pendleton Counties. These buildings range from 12,000 square feet to 60,000 square feet. The closure of American Woodmark – Moorefield Plant, Anchor Glass, Penn Ventilator, Keyser Garment and Hanover Shoe provides additional floor space. As older school buildings become surplus, an opportunity may exist to convert some to an industrial/commercial usage. Beyond these buildings, there are few other industrial/commercial buildings in the region. Those that exist are often too old, too small, and poorly located. The lack of readily available floor space has resulted in the loss of industrial prospects. It should be noted that an opportunity to further downtown revitalization exists by the location of telecommunications and computer-based firms in unused commercial buildings and the second floors of currently occupied buildings.

Table #5

Region 8 Industrial Parks, Sites and Buildings

| County | Parks, Sites, Buildings | Acreage Total | Available |
|---|---|---|---|
| Grant | Grant County Industrial Park | 60 | 3 |
| | Mountain Top Industrial Park | 50 | 50 |
| | Grant County Business and Technology Park | 150 | 150 |
| | Communications Center | 3000 sq. ft. | |
| | Multi Tenant Building | 12,240 sq. ft. | |
| | Total Acreage | 260 | 203 |
| | | | |
| Hampshire | Hampshire County/Romney Business Park | 57.9 | 35 |
| | Capon BridgeTech Park | 90 | 75 |
| | Royce Saville Site | 205.8 | 205.8 |
| | Capon Bridge Multi Tenant Building | 31,840 sq. ft. | |
| | Total Acreage | 353.7 | 315.8 |
| | | | |
| Hardy | Wardensville Industrial Park | 29 | 2 |
| | Robert C. Byrd – Hardy County Industrial Park | 263 | 38 |
| | Fitzwater Business Site | 38 | 38 |
| | Fisher Business Site | 55 | 55 |
| | Crites Site | 191 | 191 |
| | Total Acreage | 374 | 324 |
| | | | |
| Mineral | Keyser Industrial Park | 211 | 29 |
| | Fort Ashby Business and Technology Park | 70 | 39 |
| | Central Mid-Atlantic Mega Park | 900 + | |
| | Anchor Glass Facility | 278,369 sq. ft. | 43,943 sq. ft. |
| | Total Acreage | 281 | 76.8 |
| | | | |
| Pendleton | Upper Tract Industrial Park | 28 | 14 |
| | Upper Tract Shell Building 1 | 20,000 sq. ft. | |
| | Upper Tract Shell Building 2 | 40,000 sq. ft. | |
| | Pendleton Business Center (Hanover Shoe Building) | 97,122 sq. ft. | |
| | Total Acreage | 28 | 14 |
| | | | |
| | Total Acreage for the Region | 1296.7 | 933.6 |

Source: West Virginia Development Office and County Development Authorities

Map #6

Region 8 Industrial Parks, Buildings and Sites



**Region 8 PDC**

Mineral

Hampshire

Grant

Hardy

Pendleton

**Legend**

Industrial Buildings

Business and Industrial Parks

Sites
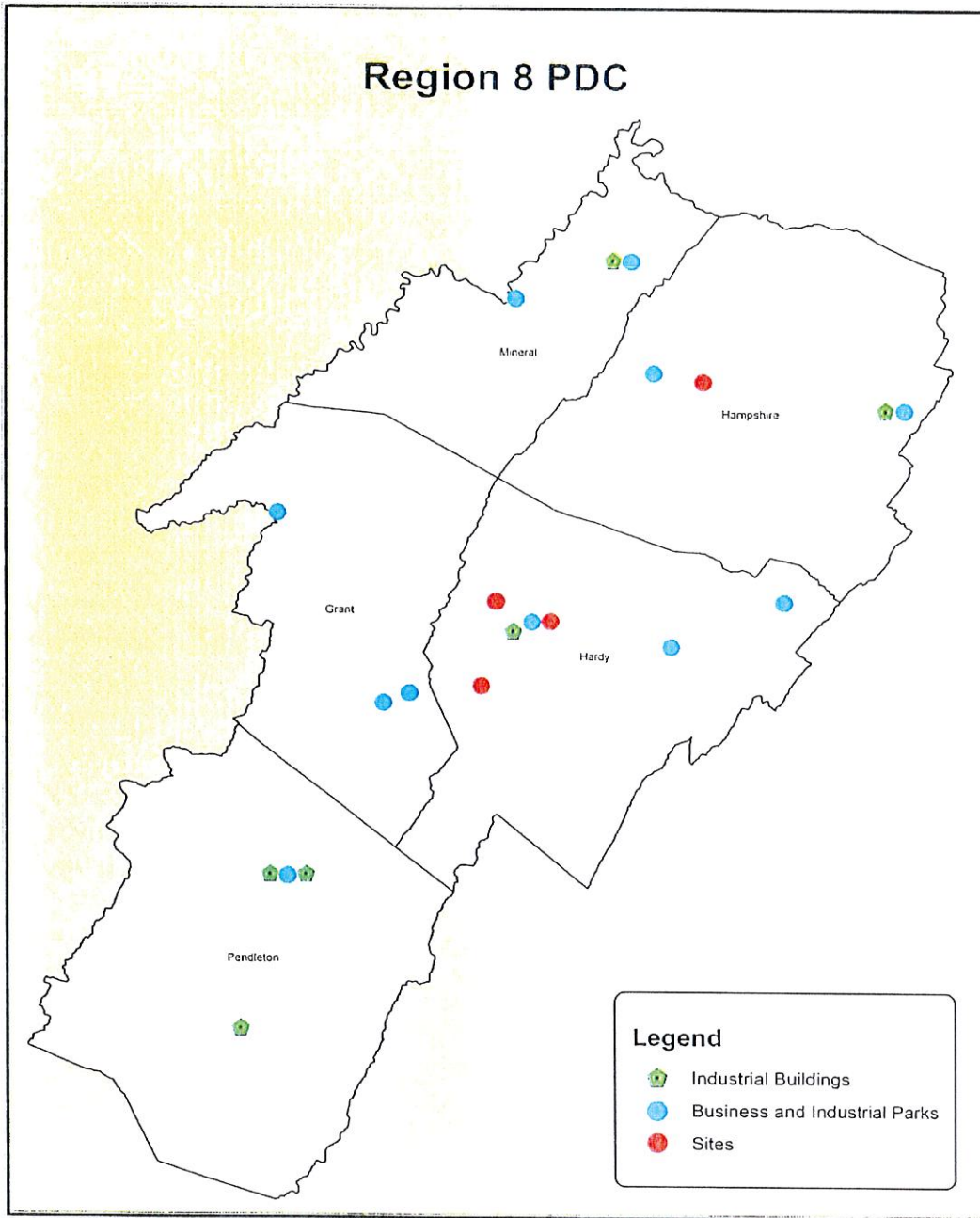
Produced by: West Virginia Development Office

## Transportation

Overall transportation in the Region is poor because of the area's rugged mountain terrain. The cost of transporting goods east/west throughout most of the Region is higher because of the length of time involved crossing mountains, especially in winter. Transportation of goods north/south is easier as roads lie in broad river valleys; however, congestion in towns in these valleys acts to impede traffic flow. The town of Keyser and northern Mineral County's economic activity are assisted by their proximity to Interstate 68 and the CSX railroad. The remainder of the region has suffered because of lack of transportation facilities.

## Highways

The region contains 251 miles of expressways and trunk highways and 2,172 miles of feeder and local roads. U.S. Routes 33 and 50 and WV Route 55, which cross the region from east to west, and U.S. Route 220, and WV Routes 28, 29 and 259, which cross the region from north to south, are the region's major traffic arteries.

Construction of Appalachian Corridor H continues and approximately 33.6 miles of the four-lane highway connect Hardy County (Wardensville) and Grant County (Scherr). The corridor is a four-lane highway which will connect Elkins, WV to Virginia near interstate 81. For up-to-date information on Corridor H construction, visit www.wvcorridorh.com.

Most major roads within the region are two-lane highways and are generally 24 feet in width. These highways are in good condition but are obsolete for economic development purposes. East-west travel is adversely impacted by mountainous terrain and prolonged grades of 9.0% are not uncommon. There are no bypasses around the region's municipalities and all major highways flow through congested towns. Highway inadequacies are compounded by obsolete bridges; the need to replace bridges at Keyser and Upper Tract on US 220 and at the South Branch and Stony Rivers on US 50 greatly impairs the ability of these roads to support economic development.

Northern Mineral County and to a slightly less degree, the City of Keyser, benefit from proximity to Interstate 68. Furthermore, portions of Corridor H are now open, and others are currently undergoing construction. Completion of the four-lane corridor through the region has greatly improved the area's access to metropolitan areas.

The region contains over 170 miles of rail line and is served by the CSX rail system and the South Branch Valley Railroad. One of CSX's main east-west lines provides freight service to northern Hampshire and Mineral Counties; the Keyser growth center and Mineral Industrial Park are served by this line. The South Branch Valley Railroad (SBVR) provides service along a freight spur that extends from Green Spring in Hampshire County to Petersburg in Grant County. The SBVRR connects with CSX at Green Spring and serves the Romney and Moorefield/Petersburg growth centers. Four industrial parks lie on or near the rail spur. The CSX line is in at least as good as condition as the bulk of the nation's rail line. SBVR is owned and operated by the West Virginia Department of Transportation. It had formerly operated as the South Branch line of the Chessie System's Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (now CSX). When Chessie turned over the rail line to the state on October 11, 1978, West Virginia became the first state in the nation to both own and operate a commercial freight railroad.

The SBVR rail line was adversely affected by a previous lack of maintenance and modernization. Improvements have been and are being made to the rail spur and its operating capacity is increasing. The WV Department of Transportation entered into a definitive agreement with OmniTRAX to operate and grown the Branch Valley Railroad. OmniTRAX assumed operational management in December 2023. Given the condition of the region's highway system, rail is of critical importance to Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, and Mineral Counties. Specifically, the rail located outside of Springfield in Hampshire County needs improvements. It should be noted that Pendleton County does not have a direct rail service.

General aviation airports are in Petersburg and Wiley Ford (Cumberland, Maryland). The Grant County Airport has recently extended its runway length to 5,000 feet and it is 75 feet wide. Additionally, they have constructed a new security fence and gate to increase airport security. Grant County has both Jet A fuel and regular fuel available. A parallel taxiway has been added. The Cumberland Airport has a runway length of 5,055 feet. Both airports have instrument landing equipment and active modernization programs. The region is within a three-hour drive of major international airports in Pittsburg, PA, Baltimore, Maryland, and Washington, DC.

## Utilities

The region contains more than 60 private and public water systems serving everything from small mobile homes parks to major municipalities. Of these systems 20 are public water providers and serve from less than 700 to over 12,000 individuals. The systems have a daily usage ranging from 45,000 to 3,700,000 gallons of water per day; and capacities from 67,500 to 4,900,000 GPD. Table #5 provides information on public water systems.

Many past water projects consisted of line extension with only modest plant improvement. Further, where water plant improvement occurred, the improvement focused on meeting immediate industrial need. This has placed pressure on existing water plants and these facilities must be considered in developing future projects; recent droughts underscore this issue. The federal safe drinking water act required improvement of almost every water treatment plant in the region. Upgrades were made to the Franklin, Moorefield, Romney, Piedmont, Wardensville, Keyser and Petersburg water treatment plants. These plants now meet the safe drinking water standards and have sufficient capacity to meet long-term demand. The availability of water service is critical to developing industrial and housing sites. Water service is generally available in Grant County, central Hampshire County, western Hardy County, and in central, western, and northern Mineral County. There is a need to expand water services in eastern and western Hampshire, central Hardy, eastern Mineral, and western Pendleton Counties as a means of fostering development of housing sites. Most of the newer existing lines can support fire protection; all new systems should be required to have fire-fighting capacity.

At present, there are 16 public wastewater treatment systems serving both municipalities and public service districts. These systems range in size from a daily capacity of 50,000 to 8,000,000 gallons and have a daily usage of from 12,000 to 1,100,000 gallons. The major systems serve from 500 to 5,000 persons and contain about 1,000 industrial and commercial users. Table #6 provides details on public sewer systems.

During the last 20 years local governments have improved many of the wastewater treatment plants in the Potomac Highlands and several wastewater systems were developed to serve small municipalities and larger unincorporated communities. Wastewater treatment facilities generally met discharge standards and it appeared that there were few if any unserved areas where conventional treatment of waste was feasible. In August of 2005, West Virginia adopted the Potomac River Tributary Strategy. This policy statement established goals for nutrient removal from wastewater discharge in support of the Chesapeake Bay. Complying with the Strategy created a significant challenge for all wastewater treatment facilities in the Potomac Highlands. The strategy added construction and operational costs to all wastewater projects that were in design and forced all treatment plant operators to plan for future projects. This included Petersburg, Moorefield, Franklin, Romney, Keyser, and Piedmont. They are now in compliance with the Potomac Tributary Strategy.

## Table #6

### Public Water Systems

| County | System | Total Customers Served | Estimated Population Served | Maximum Daily Capacity | Average Daily Capacity | Water Source | Sell to other systems | Estimated population served on other system | Problems or Issues |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grant | Mountain Top PSD | 875 | 2,360 | 300,000 | 185,000 | Spring | no | NA | |
| | Grant County PSD | 2,700 | 6,750 | 1,079,200 | 500,000 | Other System | no | NA | need alternate supply, radio read meters |
| | Petersburg Water Works | 1,370 | 2,573 | 1,700,000 | 829,900 | River | yes | 6,560 | |
| Hampshire | City of Romney | 900 | 2,000 | 1,500,000 | 500,000 | River | yes | 3,135 | |
| | Central Hampshire PSD | 1,734 | 4,310 | 712,000 | 295,000 | Other System and Spring | no | NA | need generators |
| | Town of Capon Bridge | 272 | 700 | 67,500 | 50,000 | Spring | no | | |
| Hardy | Town of Wardensville | 375 | 862 | 225,000 | 130,000 | Spring & Well | yes | 184 | |
| | Town of Moorefield | 1,150 | 2,600 | 4,896,000 | 3,700,000 | River | yes | | |
| | Hardy County PSD | 1,977 | 4,943 | N/A | 315,530 | Other System | no | NA | |
| Mineral | Frankfort PSD | 1,800 | 4,400 | 420,000 | 350,000 | River | no | NA | |
| | New Creek Water Assoc. | 1,304 | 1,300 | 26,000 | 200,000 | Other System | no | NA | |
| | Piedmont Water Dept. | 314 | 785 | | | River | no | NA | |
| | Fountain PSD | 544 | 1,360 | 86,400 | 33,000 | Well | no | NA | |
| | Fort Ashby PSD | 811 | 2,028 | 800,000 | 500,000 | River | yes | 3,000 | need additional water sources |
| | City of Keyser | 4,500-5,000 | 9,500 | 3,000,000 | 1,100,000 | Other System | yes | 4,000 | need upgraded plant, new storage tank, additional lines |
| | Town of Carpendale | 400 | 1,500 | 15,000 | 55,000 | Well | no | | |
| | Town of Ridgeley | 329 | 762 | N/A | N/A | Other System | no | | distribution lines, un-accountable water loss |
| Pendleton | Town of Franklin | 700 | 1,500 | 500,000 | 275,000 | Spring | yes | 40 | |
| | Pendleton Co PSD | 735 | 1,838 | 455,000 | 75,300 | River, Spring, Well, Other System | no | | |

**Table #7**

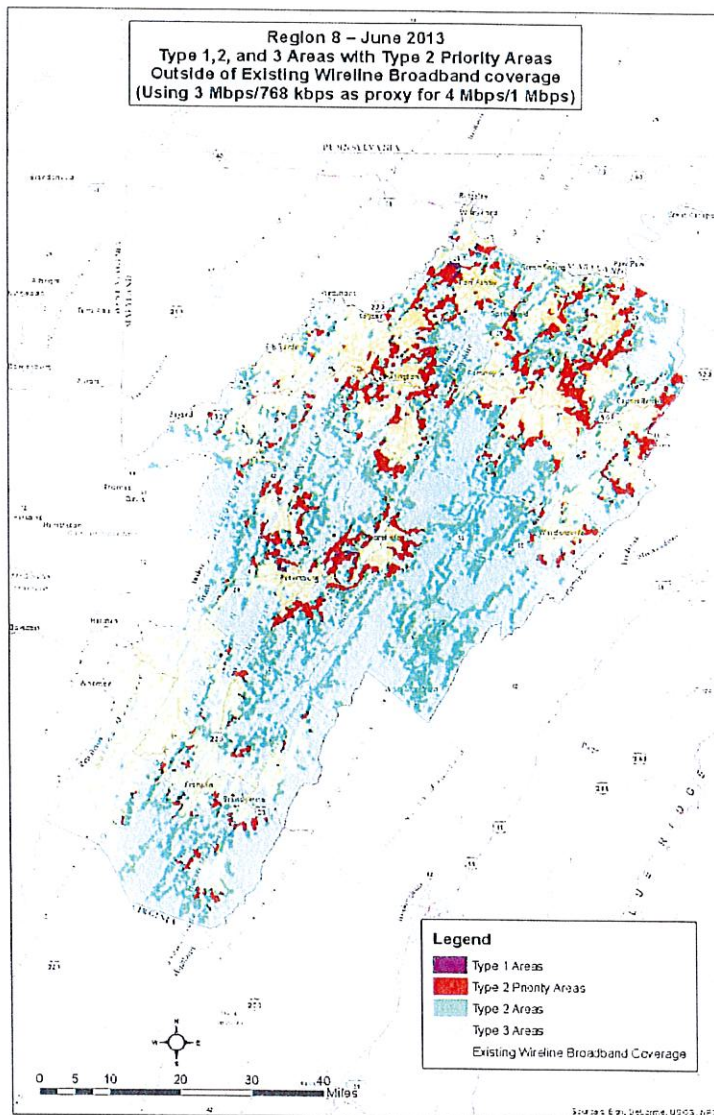Public Wastewater Systems

| County | System | Total Customers Served | Estimated Population Served | Maximum Daily Capacity | Average Daily Capacity | Discharge Stream | Problems or Issues |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grant | Mountain Top PSD | 387 | 1,044 | 110,000 | 44,500 | North Branch of Potomac | Nitrogen and Phosphorous |
| | City of Petersburg | 1,370 | 2,573 | 1,350,000 | 700,000 | Lunice Creek | Nitrogen and Phosphorous levels too high |
| Hampshire | Central Hampshire PSD | 751 | 1,878 | 536,222 | 166,870 | Little Cacapon River | dry stream, high BOD, plant too small |
| | Town of Romney | 1,025 | 1,940 | 1,250,000 | 1,250,000 | Big Run | |
| | Town of Capon Bridge | 169 | 450 | 50,000 | 26,500 | Cacapon River | grease |
| Hardy | Town of Wardensville | 365 | 839 | 400,000 | 120,000 | Capon River | |
| | Town of Moorefield | 1,095 | 2,500 | 600,000 | 430,000 | South Branch of Potomac | need an upgraded plant |
| | Hardy County PSD | | | N/A | N/A | lagoon | |
| Mineral | Frankfort PSD | 420 | 1,200 | 100,000 | 30,000 | | |
| | Piedmont Sewer Dept. | 302 | 755 | | | | |
| | Fort Ashby PSD | 616 | 1,540 | 460,000 | 460,000 | Patterson Creek | not enough capacity |
| | New Creek PSD | 1,183 | 4,732 | 2,021,760 | 184,499 | Potomac River | |
| | City of Keyser | 2,367 | 5,303 | 8,000,000 | 1,100,000 | North Branch of Potomac | |
| | Town of Carpendale | 400 | 1,500 | 63,750 | 46,750 | N Branch of Potomac via Cumberland system | constant pump maintenance, odor |
| | Town of Ridgeley | 323 | 762 | N/A | N/A | Other System | |
| Pendleton | Town of Franklin | 260 | 500 | 150,000 | 90,000 | South Branch of Potomac | Repair inflow and infiltration23 |

Electric, telephone, and natural gas service in the region are provided by private sector utility companies or rural cooperatives. Allegheny Power provides electrical service throughout most of the region. Three-phase electrical service is available in the region's major municipalities; the availability of three-phase electric has not generally hindered growth. Natural gas service is available in Carpendale, Ridgeley, Piedmont, Keyser, Moorefield, and Bayard.

Shentel, Verizon, Frontier, Hardy Telecommunications, and the Spruce Knob Seneca Rocks Telephone Company provide telephone service. Fiber optic lines and digital switching equipment are available in all municipalities and most unincorporated communities. The availability of modern state-of-the-art traditional telephone service is a major asset to the region. Cellular telephone service is good in most municipalities and population centers. However, terrain and low population densities present real problems for service providers in rural areas of the region. Thus, cell service is often not available between inhabited areas and some communities including Romney have inadequate or no service.

Companies providing telephone and cable television service also provide broadband Internet service in all the Potomac Highlands municipalities. Service is often not available outside of larger communities. Connect West Virginia's mapping of broadband service indicates significant service gaps in the Mountain Top area of Grant and Mineral Counties including Mount Storm and the Mountain Top Industrial Park, the Lost River Valley of Hardy County including Mathias and the Baker Industrial Park, and most of Pendleton County including the Upper Tract Industrial Park. While these areas have relatively low population densities, they contain important economic development assets. Further, broadband service lacks sufficient carrying capacity to serve intense users, has little or no redundancies, and only limited market choice between service providers. Even in the county with the greatest area of coverage, Hampshire, service quality is not adequate to support users requiring more than pedestrian service. Map #4 on the following page provides details on the type of areas in the region.

Region 8 – June 2013
Type 1, 2, and 3 Areas with Type 2 Priority Areas
Outside of Existing Wireline Broadband coverage
(Using 3 Mbps/768 kbps as proxy for 4 Mbps/1 Mbps)

**Legend**
- Type 1 Areas
- Type 2 Priority Areas
- Type 2 Areas
- Type 3 Areas
- Existing Wireline Broadband Coverage

0 5 10 20 30 40 Miles

Map #4 – Region 8 Broadband Type Areas

Produced by: L. R. Kimball

§31-15C-6 Categorization of areas within state for broadband deployment purposes
Based on its analysis of mapping, broadband demand, and other relevant data, the council shall designate unserved areas of the state as being one of three distinct types. These types are as follows:

1. Type 1 unserved area: an area in which broadband may be deployed by service providers in an economically feasible manner.

2. Type 2 unserved area: an unserved area in which broadband may be deployed by broadband service providers and other entities in an economically feasible manner provided some form of public moneys is made available.

3. Type 3 unserved area: an unserved area in which, at present, none of wireline broadband cannot be deployed in an economically feasible manner, and an innovative approach employing other technologies, such as satellite and wireless, is required, to provide that area with high speed internet access.

The Region 8 district has 21 community parks comprising 670 acres. These parks contain seven swimming pools, 24 tennis courts, and 11 playgrounds. The community parks provide much needed recreation for area residents and increase the region's attractiveness. Local governments have interest in undertaking new projects. National recreation areas in the National Forests expand the region's recreational assets. Cultural facilities include an amphitheater at Larenim Park in Mineral County, the McCoy Grand Theater in Moorefield, and the Landes Arts Center in Petersburg.

There are 22 emergency medical service units, 33 volunteer fire departments, 11 police departments and five county sheriff departments serving the Region 8 district. Funding for volunteer fire departments is extremely limited and most rely on funding drives to raise monies to replace critical equipment. However, while all areas of the region are served, many areas are remote and long response times are not unusual, especially during the night and on weekends.

## Housing

The 2022 Census indicated that the region contained 42,696 housing units; this is a decrease since the 2020 census. The housing characteristics table that follows will provide further information on the region's housing stock.

In 2017, Region 8 had only 178 houses considered inadequate because of the lack of plumbing. The construction of new units has allowed a few of the unfit units to be removed. However, upgrades to sewer systems and the extension of sewer service are still needed in several communities to support reducing the incidence of inadequate housing. The 2017 Census indicates that 17.6% of all units were constructed prior to 1939. Mobile homes comprise over 17.3% of the region's housing units.

The region's inadequate housing stock and the general lack of affordable sound housing limits the region's population and labor force. Additionally, these conditions encourage out-migration of persons entering their prime working years. The impact of housing conditions has implications for future economic development and housing conditions must be improved if the region is to sustain growth.

Additionally, Region 8 Planning and Development Council will assist housing developer(s) with multi-family housing projects in areas of Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral, and Pendleton counties that have necessary infrastructure in place. Housing development fulfills the specified goals of this plan, and such development receives Region 8 PDC's full support.

## Table #7

| HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total Housing Units | Grant | Hampshire | Hardy | Mineral | Pendleton | Region 8 |
| 2010 Census | 6,362 | 13,562 | 8,050 | 13,011 | 5,133 | 46,113 |
| 2012-2016 Estimates | 6,486 | 13,785 | 8,142 | 13,088 | 5,169 | 46,670 |
| 2015-2019 | 6,667 | 13,938 | 8,217 | 13,125 | 5,196 | 47,032 |
| 2020 Census | 6,667 | 14,019 | 8,309 | 13,139 | 5,223 | 47,357 |
| 2022 Census | 5,671 | 12,565 | 8,173 | 12,523 | 3,757 | 42,636 |
| Owner Occupied | 3,341 | 6,558 | 1,445 | 8,533 | 1,955 | 24,832 |
| % Owner Occupied | 58.9% | 52.2% | 51.1% | 68.1% | 52.0% | 235.60% |
| Renter Occupied | 819 | 1,508 | 1,295 | 1,999 | 406 | 6027 |
| Lacking complete plumbing facilities | 201 | 1,112 | 329 | 0 | 151 | 2,138 |

## Banking

The Potomac Highlands are served by 16 financial institutions with all counties having multiple institutions. Personal and commercial loans are available from banks, savings and loans, and credit unions within the region. While current loan rates are reasonable, they often exceed rates offered in communities with larger more aggressive lenders. The region's banks are less able to accept risk and loan to equity ratios have been declining. Increased equity requirements have hindered some from borrowing. This has increased the need for subordinate gap financing. Banks are also reluctant to lend to small start-up businesses. The conservative nature of the region's financial institutions has been comforting to investors during the banking uncertainties of 2008.

West Virginia code severely restricts general obligation bonds by local general-purpose governments. Thus, these bonds are not used as a development tool. Instead, local governments use a variety of revenue bonds, including small issue tax-exempt industrial revenue bonds for development projects. Virtually all water and sewer projects involve revenue bond financing with most borrowing at least half of the project's cost. Water and sewer projects within the five years have issued millions of dollars in revenue bonds. Recently, local governments have been using revenue bonds for industrial parks and industrial buildings. The ability of local governments to borrow for development projects is largely based on the USDA-Rural Utilities Service, West Virginia Water Development Authority, the West Virginia Infrastructure Jobs Development Council, State Revolving Funds for water and sewer, and the West Virginia Economic Development Authority. These agencies act to lower interest rates and increase the resource pool.

West Virginia Code allows local governments to use tax increment financing (TIF) and special assessment districts to fund needed development projects. These tools open additional avenues for projects that have a positive impact on investment and growth. Mineral County has used TIFs to support development of a new hospital near Keyser and a wastewater treatment system for the northern portion of the county.

## Communities

The Potomac Highlands contains six municipalities (Keyser, Moorefield, Romney, Petersburg, Piedmont, and Franklin) which have significant business districts. These downtown areas differ greatly in make-up and vary from Keyser that provides a wide range of goods and services to over 20,000 people, to Franklin, that provides day-to-day goods and services to a population of less than 7,000. Although there are large variances among these business districts, they all have common problems, including inadequate parking, deteriorated sidewalks, inappropriate street lighting, lack of green space and public amenities, pressure from shopping areas in surrounding states, and related loss of merchants. It should be noted that many of these districts also suffer from deterioration of commercial structures.

These communities are old as evidenced by the age of housing stock. In the best case, the Town of Franklin, 21.8% of all homes were constructed prior to 1939. All communities suffer from a lack of financial resources that has limited their ability to provide public amenities such as paved streets, sidewalks, and street lighting. Further, where communities have been fortunate enough to

construct these facilities, they have often lacked the resources to properly maintain them. Most municipalities identify their sidewalks as being in poor condition and many have indicated that their streets are in a poor state of maintenance. When these problems are combined with old housing stock that is often substandard, deficiencies in water and sewer systems, and poor drainage patterns, the product is blighted neighborhoods. The limited availability of monies has restricted progress in addressing their neighborhoods.

## Human Resources

Five county school boards operate the educational systems in Region 8. Approximately 11,393 students were enrolled in the systems for the 2022 school year. All county school systems met state accountability standards for math and reading. Graduation and attendance rates also met state standards. While testing for math and reading skills met state standards for the students, all systems failed to meet standards for students with disabilities.

The region contains 37 schools; their condition varies from virtually new to obsolete. Structural problems have particularly plagued the Mineral County Board of Education. Growth pressure has created a desire to construct a second high school in Hampshire County in the eastern portion of the county. All counties excluding Hardy have a need for construction/renovation of county schools.

The region has vocational educational schools associated with boards of education in Petersburg, Romney and Keyser. These schools offer vocational training in fields such as Administrative Systems, Automotive Technology, Electronic Technology, Health Care, Marketing, Auto Mechanics, Business Management, Food Management, Forestry, Information Systems, Broadcasting and Technology, Cosmetology, Career and Work Skills Training, and Welding. These schools provide an important function in preparing individuals to enter the workforce. They also play an important role in providing training to older people wishing to enhance their skill levels.

Potomac State College (PSC), a division of West Virginia University, is in Keyser. PSC has a long tradition of successful delivery of undergraduate opportunities to both on and off campus students. The college offers 53 associate degrees that transfer to WVU's main campus or most other four-year colleges. The college also offers eight two-year career and technical programs that prepare students for careers in hospitality and tourism, criminal justice, and equine production and management. The college also offers four-year degrees in Business Management and Criminal Justice as well as WVU's Regents Bachelor of Arts (RBA) degree for non-traditional students. Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College located in Hardy County, offers 11 degree programs, as well as numerous skill sets and certificates. At Eastern, students can obtain degrees or certificates in Business Management, Accounting, Information Technology, Wind Energy Technology, Nursing, Administrative Support Technology, Early Childhood Development, Computer Applications Specialist, Automotive Technology, Electromechanical Technology, and Cosmetology. EWVCTC provides distance learning facilities throughout the region, a Mobile Computer Training Center, and online classes are also available. The colleges are an important resource in meeting the region's workforce preparedness needs.

The upward shift of the median age of the region's population indicates that increasingly the educational system will need to focus on adults, with priority given to worker training and re-training. The region's colleges and vocational centers will assist in providing the needed training but will continue to need upgrades to facilities including technological upgrades if they are to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has identified all or portions of each county in the region as medically underserved areas. DHHS has identified shortages of primary health care professionals at clinics in Grant, Hardy, Mineral, and Pendleton Counties. Shortages of dental professionals occur in all five counties. All counties have been identified as having shortages of mental health care professionals.

The region contains three hospitals located in Petersburg, Romney, and Keyser, with a combined capacity of 110 acute and intensive care beds. Hampshire Memorial Hospital is the newest facility and it opened in June 2011. Hampshire Memorial Hospital is partnered with Valley Health. The Keyser facility was opened in October 2008 and is partnered with West Virginia Medicine. Grant Memorial Hospital opened in 1958. In recent years, Grant Memorial Hospital has completed significant renovations and partnered with West Virginia Medicine.

Given the 11.9% increase in persons aged 65 and over, the region's health care system will need to focus its attention on issues concerning the elderly. It should be noted that by focusing on elder care, the whole system would support increased retirement into the area while enhancing the economic vitality of health care services. With the higher wages normally paid in the health care sector, this would have a positive impact on the region's economy.

The West Virginia Division of Human Services has traditionally served as the focal point for aiding disadvantaged persons. The division is charged with the responsibility in implementing welfare reform. Unlike much of West Virginia the federal government has not waived welfare reform requirements in the Potomac Highlands. This will place a strong emphasis on moving families from public assistance to employment.

Beyond the WV Division of Human Services, several other regional entities are concerned with meeting the needs of the region's disadvantaged population. West Virginia Telamon Corporation is a private non-profit community service organization dedicated to the economic upgrading of the disadvantaged, especially seasonal and migrant farm workers. To this end, Telamon administers a wide range of job training, educational programs, vocational counseling, housing, independent living skills, nutrition, manpower, and crisis intervention services. Beyond the services available by the Telamon corporation the immigrant community faces many challenges with the lack of language services which impact, access to housing, education, and healthcare. The region would greatly benefit if more bi-lingual were services available to accommodate the growing immigrant community.

Eastern West Virginia Community Action Agency, Inc., is a private, not for profit, 501(c) (3) corporation. Its mission is to have a major and measurable impact on the causes and conditions of poverty. EWVCA organizes services that respond to the needs identified in the community. The agency offers housing services from minor repair to major rehabilitation and new construction and weatherization of existing housing. It provides emergency crisis direct assistance. It offers enrollment of youth in Youth Opportunity Camp, free vegetable garden seeds, low-income energy assistance program application assistance and distribution of USDA donated foods. The agency provides VISTA Volunteer services in youth programs, community economic development, housing, emergency services, and child support.

The Region 8 Planning and Development Council administers a wide range of programs in over 20 counties to meet the needs of various groups. These programs include the Upper Potomac Area Agency on Aging, Senior Community Service Employment Program, and the Foster Grandparent Program. Although the programs target aging West Virginians, primarily, there is assistance for the eligible unemployed and for the handicapped, age 55 and older.

## Government, Planning, and Development Organizations

### General Purpose Governments

Three-member county commissions serve as the governing body for the region's five counties (Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral and Pendleton). These county commissions have only limited authority and are allowed to carry only activities specifically authorized by the state. Further, the commissions must work with several independently elected county officials including sheriffs, assessors, and clerks. As originally envisioned, county commissions served to levy taxes and oversee a county budget. Given the financial and constitutional limits placed on county commissions, much of their development work is carried out by special purpose authorities including development authorities, public service districts, and planning commissions. The county commissions are limited by a strongly centralized state government.

The region contains 12 municipalities ranging in size from Keyser with a population of 4,879 to Bayard with a population of 263. Three of the region's municipalities are class III cities and nine are towns. Municipalities generally enjoy more power than county commissions, but the state code still restricts their activities. Key restrictions include limitations on borrowing and property transfer/disposal. As with county commissions, municipalities have expressed greater need for autonomy, especially with financial matters. Beyond functions related to preserving law and order, towns are major providers of public utilities. All towns except Bayard and Elk Garden operate water systems and nearly 90% of the region's water production capacity is controlled by municipalities. Similarly, 11 of the region's 16 sewer systems are operated by towns and they account for almost all the region's sewage treatment capacity. Towns are also responsible for the development of sound neighborhoods and have a strong impact on the provision of streets, sidewalks, lighting, and essential public services such as police and fire protection. These issues often impact the region's downtown business districts. As with counties, towns often create special purpose units to expand