

City of Bluefield 2017 Annual Report



Hello!

We are so pleased to welcome you to the 2018 annual review. Each of us ran for the Board for the same reason – we love where we live. While West Virginia and her people are often portrayed in a negative light in the national press, we hope, through our service on the City Board and in our daily lives, to tell a much different story.

Our story in Bluefield is an epic story, and yes, it is a love story. It is a story of history and of reverence for the past, but also a story in which the future, and all the change it will bring, is eagerly anticipated. It is the story of the happy marriage of rural and urban life, of industry and architecture. It is a story of trains and coal, but also of software and robotics; of conductors and locomotive engineers, but also of computer programmers and electrical engineers. It is the story of our lives, the lives of our parents and their parents, and of our children and their children yet to come. It is the story of the community we inherited, and of the community we will bequeath to those who succeed us.

As Board members and citizens, we have all been blessed with the opportunity to not only *tell* the story, but to *write* it. Every person in Bluefield has an opportunity to control the narrative of this story. As Board members, we shape it by the decisions we make each time we step into the Board room and consider the City’s business, but as citizens, we shape the story in countless ways every day – when we eat at a local restaurant or shop at a local store, when we support our local sports teams or attend a concert, and especially when we tell other people of our lives here, and why we love our City.

The technical purpose of this annual review is to report to you, the citizens of Bluefield, on the activities of City government. In that regard, we are very proud of what has been accomplished in the past year and are excited about our plans for 2018. In a larger sense, though, the purpose of this annual review is for all of us to come together as residents of our beautiful community, to celebrate our good fortune in living here, and to gladly accept our roles, not merely as residents of Bluefield, but as her stewards and guardians.

Thank you so much for joining us.

Board of Directors, City of Bluefield



Mayor Ron Martin
District II



Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson-Smith
District I



Michael Gibson
District III



Matt Knowles
At-Large



Robb Williams
At-Large

Protecting the Environment...

In August of 2007, the City of Bluefield, West Virginia hired retired music educator Mel Saunders to devise and implement a city wide recycling program. The program began slowly, collecting only three recyclable items but soon caught on with citizens and grew in size nearly every year.

Now in its 11th year of operations, with a two prong goal of helping to save space at the Mercer County land fill and conserving natural resources, the program has collected in its 10 and a half years of operations **3,673,580** pounds (1,837 tons) of recyclable material!

In 2007, the program began sharing a one ton open bed truck with the sanitation department, followed by the use of a two ton truck provided free of charge for 14 months by local businessman Tommy Cole, culminating with a large box truck secured through a grant from the State of West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection's REAP Program—Rehabilitation Environmental Action Plan, beginning in 2009. The program continued to grow with this larger truck.



Mel Saunders has prepared and shared 128 interesting and informative recycling presentations in nearly 11 years on the job. Participants have included school groups, civic organizations, senior groups, church groups, Girl and Boy scouts, Garden Clubs, businesses, colleges, the Better Living Show at the Brushfork Armory, and even Russian college students!

We want to thank Mel Saunders for 11 years of dedicated service, for creating and implementing an amazing program and for making our city a better place to live. On a personal note, while we are sad he is retiring in May 2018, we as a City want to thank you for not only for your Recycling Program, but also, your stalwart leadership of the East River Mountain Town Band!



Community and Economic Development

What is Community Development?

Community development can be understood as a planned effort to build assets that increase the capacity of residents to improve their quality of life. These assets may include several forms of community capital: physical, human, social, financial, environmental, political, and cultural.

What is Economic Development?

No single definition incorporates all of the different strands of economic development. Typically economic development can be described in terms of objectives. These are most commonly described as the creation of jobs and wealth, and the improvement of quality of life. Economic development can also be described as a process that influences growth and restructuring of an economy to enhance the economic well being of a community.

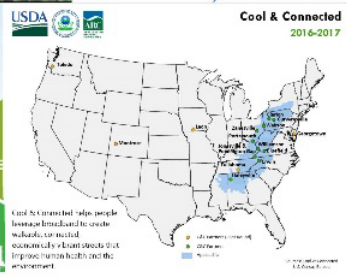
The main goal of economic development is improving the economic well being of a community through efforts that entail job creation, job retention, tax base enhancements and quality of life. As there is no single definition for economic development, there is no single strategy, policy, or program for achieving successful economic development. Communities differ in their geographic and political strengths and weaknesses. Each community, therefore, will have a unique set of challenges for economic development.

Downtown Development and Placemaking



Downtown Bluefield Vision			
Item	Location	Category	Notes
1	Historic Main Street	Historic	Preserve historic character and architecture
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MyBluefield
WE WORK FOR YOU

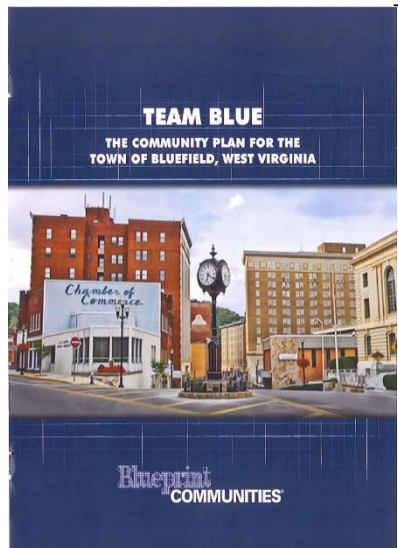


What is Placemaking?

"The rules of placemaking haven't changed since ancient times... What attracted wayfarers to the main boulevards of ancient cities were entertainment, comfort, variety, walkability, sustenance, convenience, people-watching, safety and security, commons areas, and natural elements, such as trees, gardens, and water features. A successful place was enhanced by evocative or triumphal entrances, signage, iconic wayfinders, memorable architecture, and beautiful landscapes."

—Landscape Architect, Trent Noll

Blueprint Communities and Cool & Connected Action Plans



Bluefield, WV's Cool & Connected Action Plan:
Community-Driven Strategies for Leveraging Broadband to Catalyze Downtown Revitalization

March 21-22, 2017



COMING SOON IN 2018

Bluefield recently received a grant to develop a public private partnership to deploy a wireless network in the downtown with speeds in excess of 1Gig.

Downtown Development and Placemaking Cont.



The Blue Spoon Café re-opened on September 25, 2017 with new owner, Nicole Coburn



The City of Bluefield participated in its third Small Business Saturday, November 25. It was the best year thus far with some businesses having record sales. The marketing team operated three social contests in honor of the day.



Fantastic Friday was an initiative developed by the City's Department of Community & Economic Development (CED) to create a fun time in the City every Friday from late May until the end of September. The goal was to bring people into the downtown. Part of Fantastic Friday has not been as successful as hoped and changes are being planned for this year. Outdoor movie night was a new addition this year and is planned again for this summer.

Bluefield Daily Telegraph Before



Bluefield Daily Telegraph After



Efforts to beautify downtown can be seen in the window fronts with displays, advertisements, and trivia posters.

CREATE Opportunity

“Meet the Millennials” City of Bluefield, WV Supports Entrepreneurs and Small-To-Midsized Businesses During National Entrepreneurship Week



Millennial Ambassador Program

Instagram 101 for Business Owners



What is the CREATE Opportunity initiative?

The CREATE (Creating Resilient Economies by Assisting Transforming Entrepreneurs) Opportunity Initiative is a network of strategic partners working together to support new business growth and entrepreneurship. The partners are geared to helping new businesses survive that critical startup period, while other programs provide business support services tailored specifically to young firms.

Round Table and Training Events

WEST VIRGINIA MANUFACTURING
EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

2017 Mercer County
CREATE OPPORTUNITY
Round Table Event

WHAT CAN THE WVU MEP DO TO HELP
YOU GROW YOUR BUSINESS?

WVU Industrial Extension Growth
Services and Foundational Services

- Innovation and Growth Services
- Lean Manufacturing Services
- Manufacturing Processes
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Management Systems

To Register, Please Contact:
West Virginia University Industrial Extension
Michael Goddard
(304) 222-4025
Michael.Goddard@mail.wvu.edu

4/26/2017 @ 2 PM at the Training Center of Bluefield Area Transit located
at 3208 John Nash Blvd, Bluefield, WV 24701 (Exit 1 off I-77)

**CREATE
Opportunity**

RCBI
ROBERT C. BYRD INSTITUTE

**Free Luncheon Focuses on Marketing &
Social Media**

Join us May 16 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Clover Club (530 Raleigh St.) in
Bluefield where you'll learn how to develop an effective marketing and social
media strategy for your small business.

In partnership with the City of Bluefield, RCBI will present the workshop for
small businesses and entrepreneurs. The event will kick off with a marketing
session then finish in the afternoon with an overview of social media skills. Free
lunch will be provided.

Participants must register no later than May 11 at 3 p.m.
at www.rcbi.org/go/bluefield.

For more information, contact Jane Bostic at 304.781.1681 or jbostic@rcbi.org

Registration deadline is May 11 at 3 p.m.
Unsubscribe from this list.

www.rcbi.org • 800-460-RCBI (72241)
HUNTINGTON • CHARLESTON • BRIDGEPORT

MyBluefield
WE WORK FOR YOU

Entrepreneurship “Economic Gardening”

WVSBDC Celebrates National
Small Business Week with
Workshop in Bluefield,
May 2, 2017



Bluefield State Research &
Development Center



The Perfect Space

The Commercialization Station, located at 1642 Bluefield Avenue, is a mixed-use incubator focusing on manufacturing. Once renovations and upgrades are complete, there will be 5 bays, approximately 8,000-10,000 SF and 17' ceiling height, for business incubation.

On January 12, the City of Bluefield entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Research and Development Corporation of Bluefield State College. The goal of the MOU is to partner and support existing tenants while attracting new tenants to the center. The City will be managing the day to day operations of the **Bluefield State College Research & Development Center**, located at 704 Bland Street.

What is Economic Gardening?

Economic gardening is an entrepreneurial approach to economic development that seeks to grow the local economy from within. Its premise is that local entrepreneurs create the companies that bring new wealth and economic growth to a region in the form of jobs, increased revenues, and a vibrant local business sector.

Did you know 83 percent of all companies that successfully go through an incubation process stay in the region once they graduate?

Commercialization Station

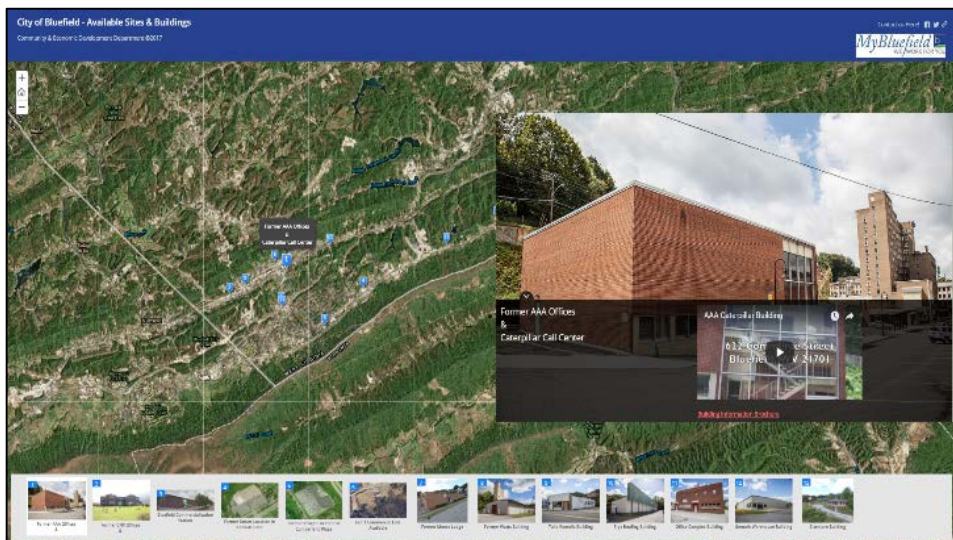


Marketing Outreach

"If we don't tell our story, someone else probably will, and we may not like how they tell it."

The City applied and received a Flex-E-Grant for the amount of \$3,825.00 with a match of \$675.00 to develop a digital CREATE Opportunity Resource Guide. This digital brochure will be a source of services, information, education, and facilitators for those who wish to develop a business enterprise in Southern West Virginia and Southwest Virginia.

This brochure can be accessed on mybluefield.org



With the use of drone technology and video, the City is marketing available properties and businesses on the Community and Economic Development website, mybluefield.org



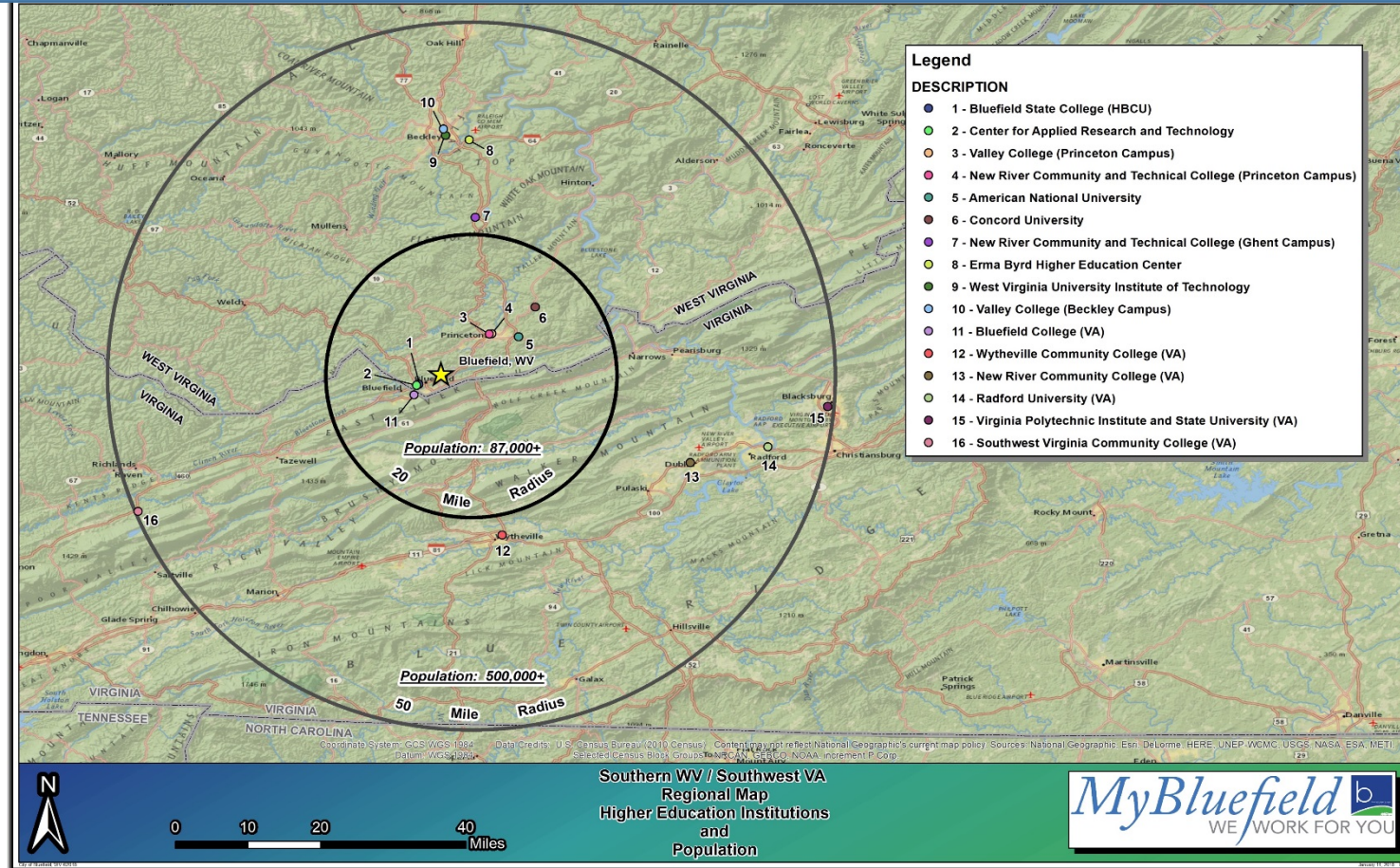
The Use of QR Codes

The CED has helped local businesses develop QR (Quick Read) codes for their websites and social medias for marketing.

When you scan a QR Code using your smartphone, you get an immediate access to its content. It can then carry an action, like opening your web browser to a specific URL.

To visit mybluefield.org, scan this QR code with your cell phone camera or with a QR reader app.

Education-Led Economic Development



Action Plans for 2018

1. Develop a new model to use talent to attract companies which also includes engaging Alumni in Economic Development Projects.
2. Actively participate in the CREATE Opportunity Initiative-For example the Second Annual 'Meet the Millennials'
3. Joint Marketing Outreach-Tell Our Story
4. Make Working Together a Priority



Bluefield State
COLLEGE



CONCORD
UNIVERSITY



VALLEY
COLLEGE



BLUEFIELD
COLLEGE



2018 Goals

Currently, the City is partnering with the WV Development Office to attract two technology projects to our region. On both projects, we are competing with other states. To succeed and win one or both of the projects, we will need to compete aggressively. We must define a competitive advantage.

Creating technology jobs in a rural area is not a new concept. CGI Federal Inc. opened a facility in 2006 in Lebanon, VA. Since that time, they have grown to over 400 employees. CGI has generated a regional impact of \$68.5 million per year. CGI's facility in Lebanon is located 58 miles from Bluefield. It should be noted that this initiative supports the actions outlined in the WV Forward Plan which was released in the fall of 2017.

As organizations evaluate options for diversifying their IT delivery models to reduce cost and risk, they must consider carefully how to retain control of critical business functions, ensure provider accountability, protect data, and achieve regulatory compliance. CGI's onshore delivery model helps government and commercial enterprises achieve all of these objectives with secure, cost-effective managed services that are made in America.

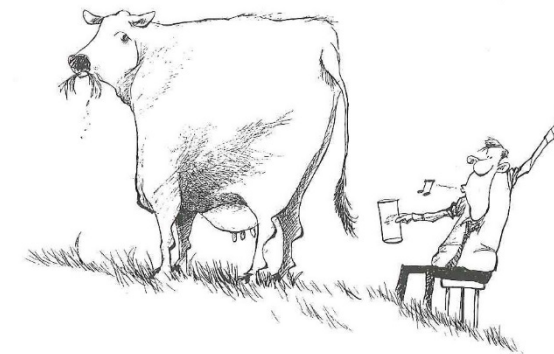
"CGI is offering the kind of jobs that will truly transform the region's economy."

United States Senator and former Governor of Virginia, Mark Warner



The City is taking a three-prong approach to economic development. First, to support our existing businesses and help them grow. Second, to attract new industry to the City and region and third, to cultivate entrepreneurship through the CREATE Opportunity Initiative.

He who wants milk should never sit in the middle of the pasture expecting a cow to back up to him.



Economic development is a “go-out-and-get-it” profession. Its successes come only to the practitioner who goes and gets the cow. (We’d say “take the bull by the horns,” but milking a bull usually gets one into serious trouble.

An economic developer must create the vision and provide the follow-through to completion. Many paths lead to “milk” in economic development. In the past, the most frequently used marketing techniques have been cold calling, trade shows, and direct mailings. These techniques are still useful, but informative websites, planned visits to corporate executives, and hosting special events have become more effective in capturing the prospect’s attention.

So if you want to attract a company, make efforts to reach them. They will not wander into your pasture without some work on your part.

2018 Goals Cont.



Our goal is to continue to seek opportunity to enhance the quality of life for the residents of the City and the region.

We have received grant funding to develop a Preliminary Engineering Report for the land owned by the City at Exit 1. It will be an outline for a master plan for development.

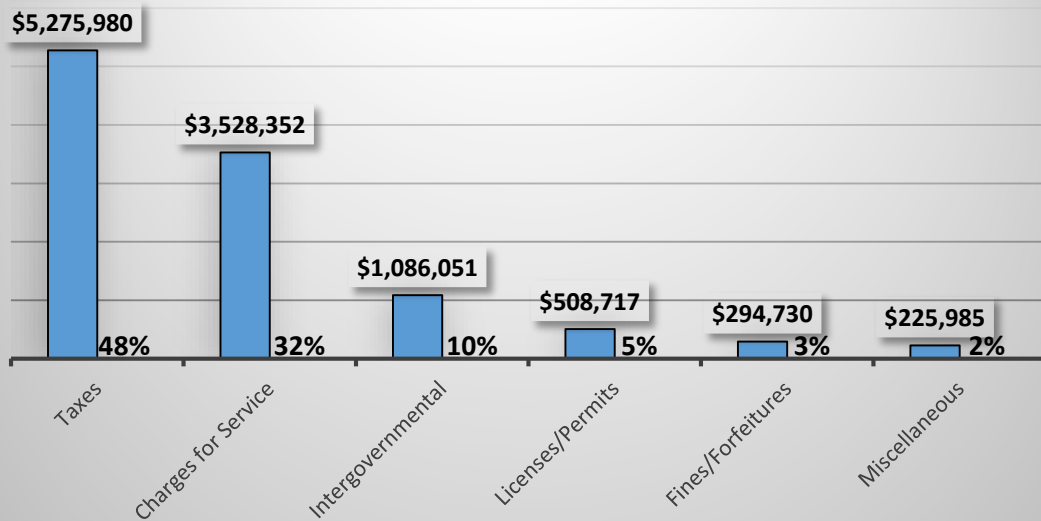
Consider a place ...

where natural beauty is abundant while having access to 21st-century infrastructure and workforce. A place with move in ready space to serve your needs. A place where you are located in close proximity to Interstates I-77, I-64 and I-81 and rail owned and operated by Norfolk Southern Railway. A place centrally located within 50 miles of fifteen higher education institutions and over 500,000 people. A place where the community and its leaders embrace and support business development. A place where you have direct access to your local, state and federal leaders. A place where military pensions are not taxed by the state.

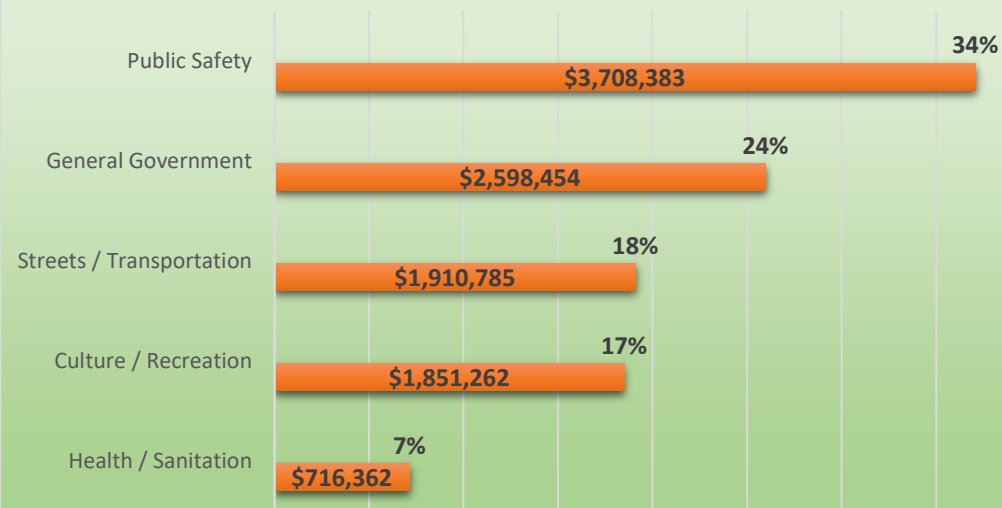
To learn more, please contact:

Jim Spencer, Community and Economic Development Director , City of Bluefield, WV
200 Rogers Street, Bluefield, WV 24701
(304) 327-2401 Ext. 2405
jspencer@cityofbluefield.com

Total Revenue - \$10,919,815



Total Expenditures - \$10,785,246



“Our new location on the second floor allows us to better serve the public, adds an additional layer of security and creates a quiet, productive work environment,” stated Treasurer Kelly Davis.

What makes up the City's Budget?

Various taxes and charges for service make up the majority of the budget, however, we are also very fortunate to receive outside contributions from foundations and individuals.

Those include:

\$442,245	Various Foundations
\$455,451	Individual Contributions
\$ 46,822	Business Contributions
\$127,605	Federal Grants

Sample Expenditure Statistics

Wages (271,180 hours)	\$3,913,444
Capital Equipment	\$ 825,051
Utilities	\$ 482,716
Landfill	\$ 255,028
Bowen Field renovations	\$ 398,755
Outside Agencies (art, library, tourism)	\$ 178,994

Behind the scenes improvements.....

- Consolidated Agencies to one floor
- Re-bid property/liability insurance
- Fixed Asset inventory brought current with audit
- Finalized process for 1% sales tax - received two distributions
- Reviewing civil service pension procedures – receiving the state drawdown monthly
- Advising the restructuring investment holdings and updating operational investment policy
- Reviewing legal ads, returned mail, estate filings, property deed changes etc. to get timely property ownership changes
- Restructured accounts payable to weekly payouts (net 30 days)
- Received an unmodified opinion for the FY2016 audit

Constantly Building, Upgrading and Preserving our City to Live, Work, Play and Learn...

Tony Wagner, the City's Engineer is charged with synchronizing agencies across the entire city to ensure infrastructure projects are running efficiently and effectively. This includes the complex task of coordinating utilities, assisting public works, supervising city wide paving, repairs and improvements to city owned facilities, special tasks assigned by the City Board.

Major projects accomplished in 2017.....

- ✓ During Street Parking Lot - Paving and electrical upgrades
- ✓ City Park Tennis Court Upgrades – The hillside behind the tennis courts was excavated to provide a 25-foot wide pad for the bleachers, improvements for storm water mitigation, future lighting and ADA Compliance.
- ✓ Herb Sims Youth Center Storm Water Mitigation - drainage ditches and pipe were constructed to help alleviate the drainage issues behind the auditorium.

Annual Programs

Sidewalk Incentive Program

Our Sidewalk Incentive Program which rolled out in 2016 allowing residents and businesses the opportunity to improve their sidewalks and curbing is thriving. Our spotlight example is the Union Mission on Bluefield Avenue who replaced the sidewalk and curbing in front of the building. Looks great!!

Street Paving

The industry standard is to repave every 25 years. We continue to repave at a rate of every 37 years...down from every 108 years prior to 2014. This year we paved 2.9 miles or poured 2,727 tons of asphalt for a total cost of \$206,835.63.



The “center of gravity” for the City of Bluefield...

Public works is organized into five major departments (Administration, Streets, Sanitation, Fleet Maintenance, and Facilities Maintenance), and is the “muscle” behind all capital projects and non-contracted repairs or improvements in and around the city.



2017 Totals

Total trash collection = 6000 tons

Special trash orders = 200

Leaf collection = 197 truckloads of leaves



Exciting new improvements...

- ✓ Powder Coated Bollards replacing the “tired and old” looking wood posts
- ✓ New “Black” Clean Looking Fencing around June Shott Field
- ✓ Bluefield’s first Dog Park!!!
- ✓ Complete Remodel of City Hall Second Floor
- ✓ During Street Parking Lot Embankment Landscape
- ✓ Tennis Court and Herb Sims Excavation
- ✓ Public Works Facility Facelift



Constantly Improving and looking for efficiencies...

This year Public Works underwent an extensive restructuring. The streamline included:

- Reduced Staffing
- Improvement of standards
- Facelift to our facility and equipment
- Work efficiency

“We have worked extremely hard to implement cost saving methods that has afforded us to properly maintain city equipment, provide better tools for our employees, and purchase much needed new equipment to maintain our city.”

Candy Sayers Director of Public Works

As we embrace new technology, we have added the Falcon Hot Box. With this tool we are able to store up to 4 tons of asphalt at 325 degrees for up to 72 hours, eliminate multiple trips to the asphalt plant saving time & money, reduce waste and increase productivity!



Improving our neighborhoods, partnerships and rediscovering the past...

We are committed to repair and replace old dilapidated streets signs and markers, including the historic downtown street signs. These neglected signs have suffered years of harsh elements and are slowly being replaced. We are working diligently week after week to keep all the entrances into our city clean and liter free and begin reclaiming portions of our city that time forgot. We have also partnered with Mercer County Liter Control, Recovery Point WV and other agencies throughout the County to clean up areas that have suffered from years of abuse at the hands of vandals. Keeping our City beautiful, clean and safe are our main objectives.



Protecting our citizens, property values and our four legged family members...

Our three member Code Enforcement Division led by Lori Mills has been busy this year. Handling over 1,215 cases to ensure the city is safe. A major goal was to revamp our building permit fee schedule that was complicated and outdated. This new fee schedule is easy to understand and helps the homeowner stay in compliance with State and Federal Code. In an effort to reduce outdated fees, this new schedule eliminates building permit fees for jobs of \$2,500 or less! We are encouraging folks to make those needed repairs to their homes, which, in the long run, increases everyone's property values.

In with the New...

We are excited with the renovation of Little Caesars on Bland Street. Our inspection department was involved throughout the process and what was once an aging building with both structural and cosmetic issues, is now a state of the art, modern restaurant! This \$250,000 investment in our city is proof positive of the new growth.

DCI / SHIRES, INC.

DCI Shires is a tremendous company which continues to make investments in our city. We love the new modern apartments located on Whitethorn Extension. Branded "Devonshire Court", it hosts 4 new apartments that are ready to be occupied and 4 more will be ready in mid- 2018. This new construction is an \$800,000 investment in our City and we look forward to partnering in future projects!

Violation	Number of Cases
Total Notices to Correct	773
Weeds Overgrown	378
Garbage / Trash Issue	290
Abandoned Vehicles	32
Animal Control	191
Other	169
Rental Inspections	105
Parking Tickets	312
Building Permits	450
Demolished Structures	30
City	21
Private Pay	9



We don't see it often, but animal abuse does occur from time to time. In October we responded to a dog being abused on Toledo Street. The dog was kicked multiple times in the head and his injuries were extensive. Tanner, the beagle mix, ultimately lost his left eye.

Because of the generous donations from the public, Tanner was able to get the medical care he needed and was adopted into a loving home.



Out with the old...

Demolitions continue to be a huge focus for the city and its Buildings Commission. We condemn on average 3-4 houses a month and tore down over 30 structures in 2017. A new process of coordinating with the private property owners has saved tax payers **\$103,131!** This new process is holding people accountable for their properties and removing the blight from neighborhoods one house at a time. We are not slowing down and currently have 14 houses ready to be torn down for 2018.



The demolition of the Knight's Inn on Cumberland road was by far the largest, most time consuming project the inspection department tackled in 2017. This old motel had been vacant for several years. Prior to it being deemed “unfit for habitation”, the police had responded to over 300 calls at this location. Roof leaks, bacterial growth and lack of regular maintenance had taken its toll over the years and structure was unsafe, dangerous and unfit for people to reside. Once an “hourly rental space” that encouraged illegal activity, we are encouraged to help the owner market this new space for development. A special thanks to former Mayor Tom Cole who championed this effort.



Our department is very fortunate to receive the support from the citizens of Bluefield, these donations/grants help us, serve and protect our community.

- HIDTA \$20,089.00
- JAG Task Force \$25,083.37
- Governors Highway Safety Program \$19,592.00
- USDA \$50,000.00 (used for PD vehicles)
- K-9 Vest \$6000.00
- Cages for K-9 Vehicles \$5000.00
- Radios and vehicle equipment \$8000.00
- Radar units \$2000.00
- Vehicle purchases \$100,000.00
- K-9 Program \$110,000.00

Pictured below with our Board of Directors are some of our officers that were promoted on September 25, 2017:

Bottom Row: BL Hamm Sergeant to Lieutenant and Chief DM Dillow

Back Row: KL Adams Detective to Sergeant Detective
MD Pertee K9 Officer to Sergeant K9 Officer
BW Copenhaver K9 to Sergeant K9 Officer
JW Lucas Patrolman to Sergeant
JM Daniele Patrolman to Sergeant K9 Officer
JJ Harris Sergeant to Sergeant Detective

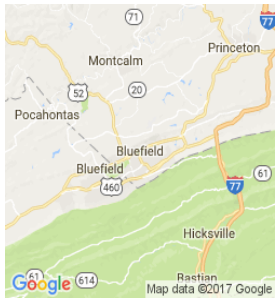
Not pictured, Sergeant JD Vance promoted to Lieutenant on March 14



Congratulations!

Exciting News for our City!!!!

We are proud to announce that the City of Bluefield made the list of Top 101 safest cities in the United States and was in the 25th Percentile according to SafeHome.org Communications! Bluefield was also ranked #7 in WV. For more information on this study please visit: <https://www.safehome.org/safest-cities/WV>



Bluefield, WV	Safety Score: 85.4
Population: 10,445	Violent Crime Trend: -9.1%
Citizen-to-Officer Ratio: 306	Property Crimes: 186
Violent Crimes: 68	Property Crime Trend: -14.8%

Bluefield Police Department 2017 Statistics

Calls for Service	10,345
Arrests Made	1,189
Reports Filed	1,477
Citations Issued	9,291 / 4,746 warnings
MVA's	263
Parking Citations	817
Fines Collected	\$275,924.34
Firearms Seized	47

Community Policing...

Engagement at all level is paramount to earning trust with our citizens. From taking pictures with kids on Halloween to helping with school projects, our officers and K-9 units are always willing to assist the citizens of Bluefield!



Some guardian angels have fur, not wings...



The Bluefield, West Virginia Police Department recently received three new bullet-proof vests for the K-9 unit service dogs thanks to donations from 10 local businesses.



"Thanks to the generous donations from the community our department will have 4 fully functional K-9 units in service by February 2018. These K-9's provide a great value to our community by protecting our officers and getting dangerous drugs off the streets of Bluefield."

Chief Dennis M. Dillow



K-9 Unit Gregor, the newest addition to our K-9 team, is currently in training, he will be in service February 2018.



K-9 Units Thor (left) and Ace



K-9 Unit Niko



K-9 Unit Niko



In Memory of Lt. Aaron L. Crook



Lt. Aaron L. Crook was killed in the line of duty May 30, 2017. Lt. Crook was a 9 year veteran with our Department. He was survived by his wife and two small children.



These things we do, so others may live...

2017 set a new record in call load. Over **1,634** times our men responded to an incident. EMS increased by over 100%, however, Fire Alarms dropped by 20% due to the enforcement of the False Alarm ordinance. This is critical when measured against wear and tear on vehicles and freed up man-hours for other emergency calls.

EMS	Fire Alarms	Fires	MVC	Utility	Good Will	K-9 DEPLOYMENT
963	320	43	197	71	75	8

Train as if your life or others depends on it...

Continuous training on the industry's most current tactics, techniques and procedures is what makes a full time professional fire department head and shoulders above volunteer departments. Every man receives over 240 training hours making us compliant the ISO and NFPA Standards. **This is what determines our citywide insurance rates.** During this eventful year we have met numerous challenges and exceeded many expectations; here are a few of the highlights from the year.



This year the BFD has been busy engaging the community; helping to strengthen and grow as a team along with the other departments.

The biggest impact we make is in our fire prevention week where we educated close to 700 children. All schools received training and we expanded our reach by partnering with Bluefield State College for their science fair day. This is an excellent opportunity for our department to reach the entire community and distribute both literature and smoke detectors. We are on track to distribute over 400 more smoke detectors in 2018!



A critical investment in the safety of our city...

We are happy to announce the addition of a SeaGrave Front Line Attack Pumper. Designed and specifically built to meet the rigorous terrain in Bluefield while protecting our men. What makes it special?

Safety

- ❖ Fully enclosed stainless steel Cab and a stainless steel Body to protect in the event of a rollover or crash.
- ❖ 360 degree LED lighting that turns night into day. Critical for our men to see and be seen.
- ❖ Built with roll up doors so now you do not have to worry about an overhead door falling or shutting on you.

Proficiency

- ❖ 450 Horse Power engine with 1250 pounds per foot of torque. This means more power getting up Bluefield's hills with a full load of water!
- ❖ Able to pump 1,500 gallons per minute with Triple A foam capability and a 100-foot quick attack line on the front of the bumper.
- ❖ A 1850-Watt Inverter to help us run electrical equipment, a centrally located control panel that increases speed on the scene - because seconds do count.

Where do we go from here...

This is the first replacement of an aging fire fleet. Once this Fire Truck is paid off, we will move to purchase a second pumper followed by a new ladder truck. Our current secondary pumper is 20 years old, closely followed by a 17 year old ladder truck.



Thank you to those who keep us equipped...

Chief Rick Cary and his team have been actively pursuing alternate funding sources to equip the department. This is graduate level work and we are additionally thankful to those organizations who have generously assisted the cause.

- ❖ The Community Foundation of the Virginias -Bunker Gear, Protective Gloves, and Nomex Hoods.
- ❖ West Virginia American Water – Hoods and Protective Gloves.
- ❖ Brandon Disney and State Farm Insurance – K9 and K9 Vehicle + Smoke Detectors
- ❖ USDA Grant – Funding towards the new Fire Engine.
- ❖ Bill Cole Auto Mall - donated an ATV for the Hatfield and McCoy trail emergencies.
- ❖ June Shott – Exercise Equipment
- ❖ Hugh I. Shott – Bunker Gear and Turn out Equipment
- ❖ Corte Foundation, Frank Smoot, 1912 Foundation, Tierney Foundation – Thermal Imaging System



An excellent Employee Handbook brings the employer and the employees on the same platform as it provides standardization of personnel and benefit policies, helps to prevent misunderstandings, complaints and job dissatisfaction out of misinterpretation of personnel and benefit policies. It informs your employees of their rights while at the same time defends your company against lawsuits. A major overhaul of the Employee Handbook is taking place under the direction of the City Attorney.



Finding the right employees can be a challenge, so it's very important to retain qualified employees once they have been found. The City has continued to analyze work flow and consider strategies to run more efficiently. By taking the time to find qualified and dedicated employees, the city has found ways to operate more efficiently, and create and retain loyal employees. More focus has been put on reaching out to possible candidates through social media and employment search engines such as Monster and Indeed. In only 48 hours one job posting received 444 views and 147 applicants at **no cost** to the city. A newspaper ad can run anywhere from \$150 to \$350 for very little information. This could be an annual savings nearing \$10,000 per year. A total of 32 new employees were onboarded this year. Taking time to find candidates and using a thorough interview and ranking process is crucial. The city is doing even more to retain the successful candidates by providing needed resources, equipment, investing in additional training and the development of skills necessary for the growth of the employee and establishing more efficient operations.



Developing talent is the best and cheapest way to staff. By providing training and certifications through many providers, the City of Bluefield has been able to develop talents needed in most departments. Some of which includes police and fire, transporting passengers, child care, employment law, residential building

inspection, property maintenance, animal control, and housing inspection, residential electricity repair, and small engine repair. By investing in our staff, we have both well-trained and loyal employees.



Employee Health and Wellness

The City of Bluefield knows that employee health and wellness affects the city and its finances in several ways. Wellness programs have the potential to lower health care costs, increase productivity, decrease absenteeism, and raise employee morale. By offering employee training in proper hydration and activity goals, the city has helped prepare and incentivize the employees to participate in the 5K Challenge of the Two Virginias. Most employees had never participated in this type of event. For the two years we have competed against the Town of Bluefield Virginia, we have taken the “Best Bluefield of the Best Virginias” trophy and finished in both 2nd and 3rd places for the top teams in the event. The city plans to offer more of these programs to help raise employee awareness and continue healthy lifestyle changes.



Other wellness initiatives the city promotes is an annual flu clinic to make getting the vaccine more convenient to the employees and the city promotes the PEIA Healthy Tomorrow programs. Healthy Tomorrows will roll out a GO365 program this year that is a phone application to help employees earn bucks toward gifts and discounts.

Human Resource facts regarding Worker's Compensation & Unemployment Liability:

Worker's Compensation:

❖ Lag Time

Reporting a worker's compensation insurance claim as promptly and accurately as possible is the first step in controlling insurance premiums. Lag time is the time between date of injury and date of reporting. In years past we have had lag time reach as high as 17 days, but with focus on training the managers and adding instruction to new hires during the onboarding process, we finished out last year at 1.2 days on lag time.

❖ Return to work / Light Duty


The longer an employee is off of work and collecting lost wages, the less likely they will ever return to the job. When this happens, it quickly causes a domino effect within the company. Not only will future insurance premiums increase, but the morale of other employees may diminish as they are forced to pick up the slack of the injured employee. Eventually, employees may look for ways to take advantage of the situation in an attempt to benefit from a work injury. The city is diligent in working with the injured employee and the treating physician to accommodate the injured employee with a modification of duties to insure the employee can return to work as quickly as possible. Year-to-date, worker's compensation has paid \$0 for TTD (Total Temporary Disability) and only \$110.54 in medical claims paid out. In meeting with the BrickStreet Safety & Loss Control Consultant, we received a great report with low injuries and speedy reporting. With focus placed in these areas, the city's worker's compensation monthly premium has reduced from \$11,100 to \$7,600 in the last 3 years yielding an annual reduction of \$42,000.

Unemployment Liability:

An employer cannot prevent paying certain unemployment claims, but with proper procedures in place the city has been able to prevent paying claims filed on resignations and “for cause” terminations. By working closely with the managers, providing timely and concise detail of the reason for termination, and proving that the employee has received prior counseling on policy violations, the city has an impeccable record for winning these cases.

Fast, stable computers are crucial to a productive and efficient workforce. Keeping with our commitment to maintain a current and healthy computer lineup, we replaced 5 machines in 2017. We also added an additional server dedicated to file storage. With the addition of our GIS Specialist, and with the videos being processed by the Economic Development team, the need for storage space is ever growing. The new server accommodates our current needs, and is expandable to meet the needs of the future.

A diagram illustrating the flow of data. On the left is a tall, disorganized stack of many yellow and white folders. A blue curved arrow points from this stack to a single silver CD in the center. Another blue curved arrow points from the CD to a computer monitor on the right. The monitor displays a blue abstract background. This visualizes the process of consolidating a large volume of physical files into a single digital format for display or storage.

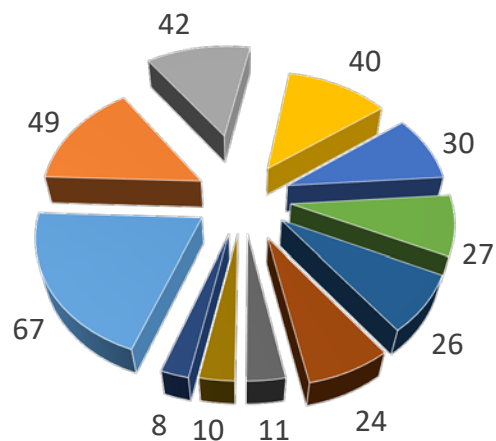


Just as equipment is important, so too is software. This year we partnered with iWorq, a third party provider of web-based solutions, for tracking everything from internal work orders, sign maintenance, code enforcement issues, paving and all types of permits. For code enforcement, iWorq replaced a product that had been used for many years, giving the staff many more options in tracking and reporting. iWorq is a new tool for Public Works, allowing the staff to track vehicle maintenance and work orders, with more tools being implemented in 2018.



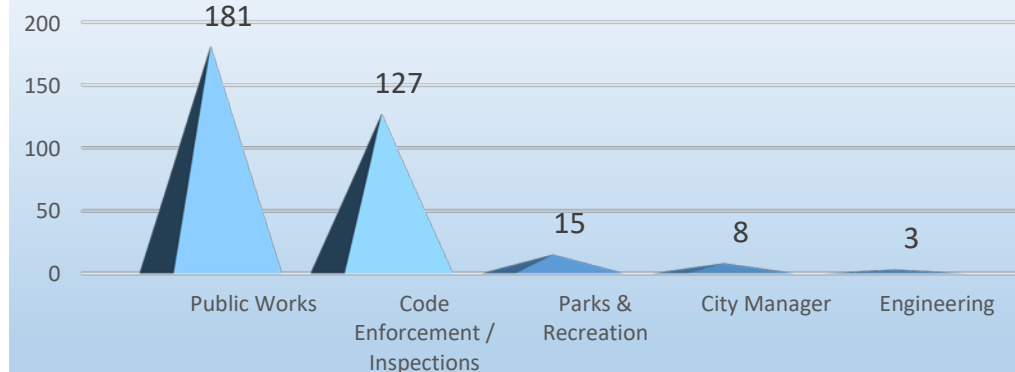
Fix-it Bluefield continues to be an important tool for our residents, businesses and staff alike.

Requests by Type

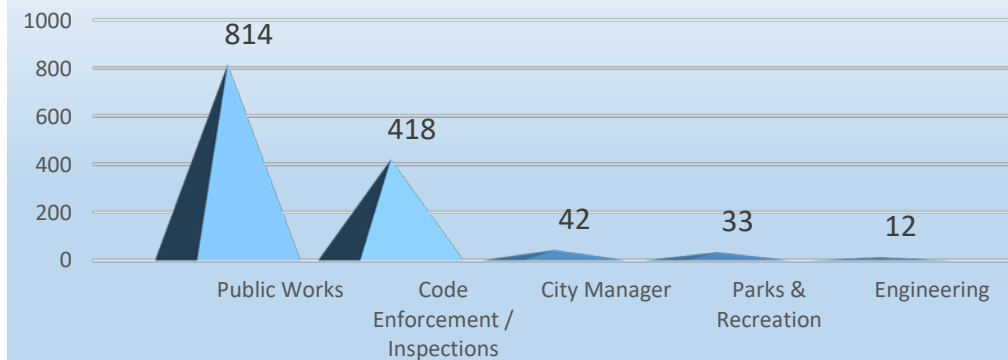


- Leaf Pickup
- Other
- Pothole / Street Repair
- Animal Issue
- City Park / Recreation Facilities
- Abandoned Vehicles
- Other
- Overgrown Weeds and Grass
- Streetlight Issue
- Report Litter/Trash
- Parking Issues

Requests - Jan 2017 - Dec 2017



Three Year Trends



A great place to Live, Work, Play and Learn...

This was a year of “revitalization” for the City of Bluefield Parks and Recreation Department. Projects included: new windows, family bathrooms, locker rooms, HVAC systems drainage repairs, and the installation of a new digital sign. In addition to these improvements to the facility, we held community-wide cleanup days to focus on revamping local parks, Mitchell Stadium, and the East River Mountain Overlook. Together, with the voluntary efforts of the Bluefield Trail Committee and Boy Scouts, a new trail head at Thorn Street was developed. The Bluefield Trail Committee added one final touch to the park by creating an outdoor free library for children. Our final major revitalization event was the new field turf installed in Mitchell Stadium along with comprehensive training on proper care to prolong the life. A half million dollar investment, we are proud to say the field is in the best shape in over a decade.

A cornucopia of events...

The Bluefield Auditorium has been busy. First time functions like City of Bluefield’s Cool and Connected - Strategic Planning Workshop and Spring Fest. A regional job fair with over 70 businesses participating to promote local job openings. Our after-school program ran its first successful all-day traditional camp this summer, serving as a facility for kids to continue their education, while making new friends and enjoying physical activity daily.

On an athletic note, Mitchell Stadium housed over 55 football games this season, including two of the Bluefield Beaver’s playoff games before they made way their way to their 11th State championship title. We were also very obliged to have Relay for Life choose our stadium as their 2017 fundraising location.



And even more...

The Bluefield City Park served as location for our annual Crying Wolf Challenge bike race and Holiday of Lights 5K Challenge. For the second year in a row, the City of Bluefield partnered with the Town of Bluefield, VA to host The Two Virginias 5K Challenge. This race featured a special competition between the two Bluefields, where we were declared “The Best Bluefield in the Best Virginia” for the second year in a row.

What’s in store for 2018...

Here at Parks and Recreation, we have worked hard to provide superior childcare, promote health and fitness, and inspire the community we serve. It is with this attitude that we felt it was in the best interest of the City to acquire the Greater Bluefield Community Center. Our hope is to enhance the atmosphere of the facility and provide a family-oriented center that is desirable for the entire community. This will have a positive impact on property values, provide a critical amenity inside the city, help attract new business and residents and provide programs of value for the members.



Serving Our Community In Other Ways...



The children as well as the adults look forward to riding the Trolley through the Holiday of Lights!



Bluefield Area Transit also provide a means for area residents to visit different businesses throughout the City.



Bluefield Area Transit (BAT) is one of the leading transit agencies in the State of West Virginia.

At the 2017 Annual Conference, two of our employees were chosen for top honors!



Patrick Griffin was named Driver of The Year!

John Reeves was named Employee of the Year!

First CNG Bus operating in the City of Bluefield

We now have the first (CNG) Compressed Natural Gas bus ready for service. BAT has partnered with Bluefield Gas Company to provide fueling for this vehicle. In the upcoming months the City of Bluefield will have its own “slow fill” fueling station that will be placed at the new Transit Transfer Station on Bluefield Avenue. This is the beginning of a CNG Conversion for the entire fleet.

Why CNG?

Besides the benefits to the environment...BAT will see an average of 55% savings in fuel costs, reduce oil changes and lower maintenance costs.



State of The Art Transfer Station

Located in Downtown Bluefield

Bluefield Area Transit has approval for a state of the art Transfer Station located in Downtown Bluefield. The City of Bluefield will have the first CNG fueling station in this area. This new station will also provide our drivers a place to take a break, and our riders will be able to get out of the elements.

There will be no tax burden to the residents of the City; The WV Division of Public Transit will be dispersing the Federal funding that has been obtained, as well as the money that has been allocated from State funds. In addition, we will also be receiving support from the Shott Foundation.

This project will have two phases:

- Phase One: An Architectural and Engineering Firm will be acquired through the Division of Public Transit with the cost being handled through their office
- Phase Two: The construction of the facility



Bluefield Area Transit is Constantly Improving



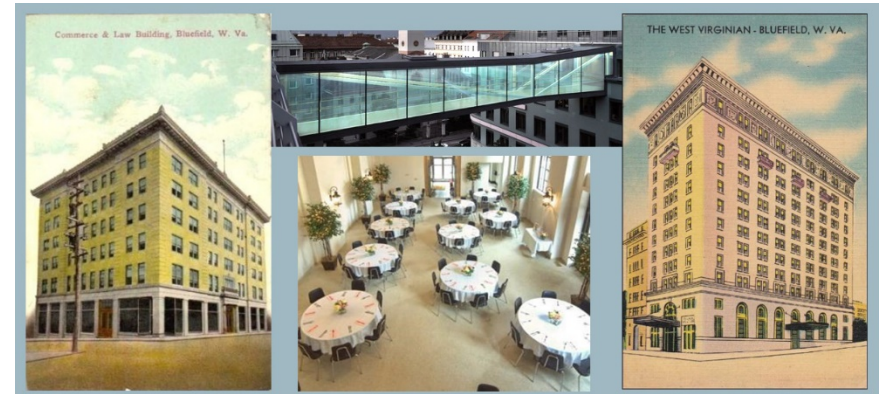
Navigating outside of the box...

- Military Training Exercises
- Boy Scout Jamboree
- Four Seasons Recovery Point
- The “Tailyard”
- Compressed Natural Gas
- LED Conversions
- Street Light Survey



What's in store for 2018 and beyond....

- ☐ Community Center
- ☐ Broadband
- ☐ Bluefield Area Transit Transfer Station
- ☐ Commercialization Station
- ☐ Exit 1 Feasibility Study / John Nash Blvd
- ☐ Storm Water Master Plan and Rate Adjustment
- ☐ Department of Public Works Relocation
- ☐ Shovel Ready Pad Development
- ☐ Natural Gas Expansion to Industrial Park
- ☐ Citywide Directional Signage
- ☐ Downtown Design/Demolition/Redevelopment
- ☐ Comprehensive Plan
- ☐ Land Bank





Chasing Zero

Hospital Acquired Infections Reductions

- *Zero Central Line Associated Bloodstream Infections (CLABST) Since 2014
- *Zero Catheter Associated Urinary Tract Infections (CAUTI) Since 2016
- *Zero Ventilator Associated Pneumonias Since 2015
- *Zero Hysterectomy Surgical Site Infections Since 2015
 - * Significant Decrease in C.diff infection rates hospital wide in 2017

FINANCE

Community Benefit Report
Year End 2017

Salaries and Benefits	\$33.1 Million
Business Taxes	\$722,000
Charity Health Care	\$884,000

New Providers on Staff 2017

- 1 Nephrologist
- 2 Interventional Cardiologists
- 1 Vascular Surgeon (*December 2016*)
- 1 Pediatrician
- 1 Internist
- 1 Family Nurse Practitioner

Scheduled to be credentialed by February 1, 2018

- 1 Internist
- 1 Family Nurse Practitioner