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Information Technology at Virginia Tech

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New River Valley Telecommunications Planning

The New River Valley today lags behind state average income levels. One key to improving and sustaining economic health is a state-of-the-art, broadband, telecommunications systems. Staff members within Information Technology who are involved with the Planning Committee of the Telecommunications Committee of the New River Valley Planning District Commission are associated with eCorridors, including John Nichols, Brenda van Gelder, Jean Plymale, and Seth Peery. The goals of the planning activity are to attract and retain good employers, to lead in research and entrepreneurial development, to foster community connectivity, to enhance the quality of life, and to provide higher quality public and private services efficiently and effectively.

Major employers in the region report that they use the fastest available connections, but are still limited in the speed of connectivity.

The Telecommunications Plan envisions a NRV Community Fiber-Optic Network that establishes inter-county, intra-county, and local access points. An open-access fiber network is envisioned as a long-term solution. It would create an economic engine for the region, connecting higher education institutions, industrial parks, commercial centers, schools, and local governments, including fire and rescue.

A regional entity that would develop, own, and manage the network is envisioned. Priorities for network linkages are: (a) between Blacksburg and the Radford Army Ammunition Plant, (b) connecting Radford, Dublin, and Pulaski, and (c) between Dublin and Giles County.

A DVD featuring interviews with Virginia Tech faculty and staff and with local leaders is being used to inform the public and local policy makers. Contact Brenda van Gelder to request a copy. Also, see http://www.nrvpdc.org/NRVTelecomPlan/NRVTelecomPlan.html

AIS Banner Finance Team

The Banner Finance Team, part of Administrative Information Systems (AIS) at Virginia Tech, provides information systems management, support, maintenance, and modification services to the university offices served by Banner Finance and Accounts Receivable Systems. These include, among others, General Accounting, Accounts Payable, Purchasing, Fixed Assets, Research Accounting, Student Accounts (Accounts Receivable), Budget Tuition (budget tuition payment plan available to students), Tuition Remission (a method for departments to pay tuition for qualified graduate students) as well as several other projects.

Team members include Mark Hoppe, team leader; Judy Wills, technical lead for the finance areas and Jay Smith, technical lead for the accounts receivable area; Wendy Biggs, Gary Kendall, Nora Kirstein, Ismael Medaghri Alaoui, Brenda Oliver, Ken Williams, and Vanessa Williams.

Recent significant projects the team participates in are: interfacing the Purchasing Department with the eVA system (the e-procurement system for the Commonwealth of Virginia), coordinating the move from client Banner to Internet Native Banner (INB), and automating a batch invoice interface to Accounts Payable.
Meeting Resources: IT Conference rooms

Looking for a place to hold a meeting? Conference rooms controlled and available to Information Technology staff include those listed below with reservation information.

**Torgersen:**
Room 3001  To reserve, contact Judy Alford, 1-2309, jualford@vt.edu or JoAnn Michaels, 1-6664, jmichael@vt.edu  Capacity: 10
Room 1300 C:  To reserve, contact Randy Marchany, 1-9523, marchany@vt.edu or Wayne Donald, 1-7694, wdonald@vt.edu  Capacity: 15

**Andrews Information Systems Building (AISB) 1700 Pratt Drive**
To reserve:  Members of units with offices in AISB—self-service reservations through Exchange calendars; Learning Technologies staff contact Judy Alford, 1-2309, jualford@vt.edu; other IT staff contact Cindy Woods, 1-2311, cfwoods@vt.edu; For special set-up, contact Ken Wieringo, 1-5025, kwiering@vt.edu
Room 211, capacity 20  Room 212, capacity 20
Room 113, capacity 25  Room 208, capacity 20
Room 209H, capacity 7

**Research Building XIV (RB 14) 1770 Forecast Drive**
To reserve:  Contact NIS Receptionists, 1-6460. NIS reserves the right to re-schedule when critical IT meetings requiring the larger space must be held.
Room 115, capacity 30—reserved only for groups over 12 in number
Room 215, capacity 15
Room 123, capacity 8

**Research Building VII (RB 7) 1700 Kraft Drive**
To reserve:  Contact Cindy Woods, 1-2311, cfwoods@vt.edu or Jamie Boggs, 1-9287, jaboggs@vt.edu
Conference Room 1, capacity about 10  Conference Room 2, capacity about 8

**Corporate Research Center rooms available to IT as CRC tenant**
To reserve:  Call 540-961-3600 extension 2100; for more info, see http://www.vtcrcc.com/becomeatenant/conferancerms/
Garvin Board Room, capacity 26
RB 2 conference room, capacity 10
RB 12 Conference Room, capacity 25. Food may only be supplied by Sigma Grill.
RB 16 Conference Room, capacity 35

**Airport conference room—available to CRC tenants, including IT**
To reserve, call Regina Young, 231-4444

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**Blackboard Upgrade**
During semester break, Online Course Systems upgraded Blackboard to version 6.2.3. The upgrade includes abilities for instructors to:

- Customize the menu, choose navigation methods, add links, and customize titles of links;
- Create internal links;
- Copy functionality to move information to different areas;
- Add content anywhere within the structure;
- Create assignments and post in Blackboard;
- Edit assessments in an improved Test Manager; and
- Better manage grades.

All participants can communicate through text-based messages in a new lightweight chat, including the sending of private messages.