



FEBRUARY 2010

POPULATION, INCOME ON RISE IN ROANOKE REGION

The results are in. The Roanoke Regional Partnership’s first Report on Regional Economic Progress, released earlier this month, shows, among other things, that the Region’s population and income rose between 2006 and 2008.

The report charts 14 indicators – ranging from business openings to boat ownership – and was prepared by the research staff of the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission. The list of indicators is based on what measurements best reflect the economy and quality of life in the region.

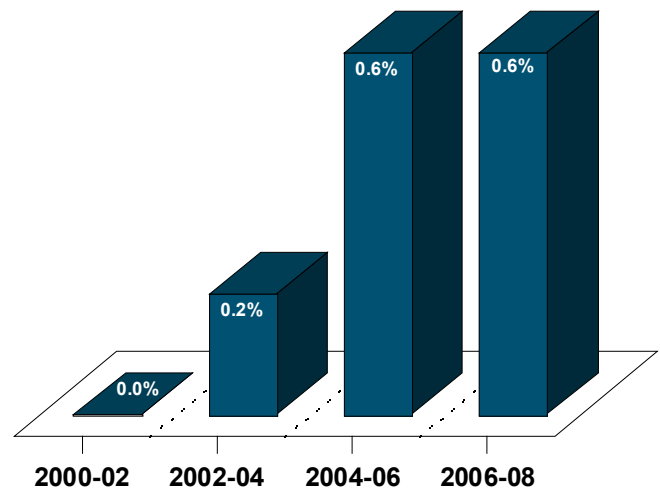
“Tracking economic metrics is part of the Roanoke Regional Partnership’s program of work so we can paint a realistic picture of the region’s economic prosperity and quality of life assets,” said Beth Doughty, executive director. The indicators will be monitored annually for the next five years.

The report shows a mixed picture of progress in population growth, income, taxable sales, business establishments, retail and restaurants, gross metropolitan product, new vehicle registrations, home sales, and metropolitan economic performance. Also included are quality-of-life indicators such as trail mileage, boats registered, state park attendance, Carvins Cove usage, and employment in arts/entertainment/recreation.

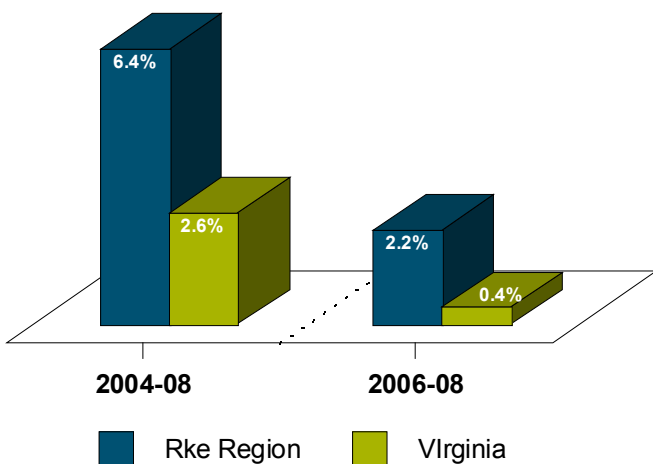
On the positive side, growth rates dramatically improved between 2006 and 2008 from earlier in the decade. Several localities went from losing population each year to positive growth. The region as a whole went from zero growth in the earliest part of this decade to 0.6 percent annualized growth between 2006 and 2008.

Another key indicator is income. Inflation-adjusted incomes have been stagnant in the region over the longer term. More recently (from 2004 to 2006, most current available), data suggests that the region has had faster growth than Virginia. The Metropolitan Statistical Area median adjusted gross income for married couples increased by 7.57 percent from 2004 to 2006, while the state’s increased just 6.11 percent. However, the region remains far off Virginia's gross income figures.

Compounded Annual Population Growth Rate



Boat Registration- Percentage Change



Quality-of-life indicators reinforce the region's new focus on promoting outdoor amenities. Virginia state park attendance in the region is increasing at a significantly higher rate than in the Commonwealth in general. Usage of Carvins Cove has grown as well. However, employment in the arts, entertainment and recreation sectors have declined, losing ground against Virginia trends.

The indicators were selected to reflect a general picture of the economy and regional assets. Doughty says the report may be expanded in future years to reflect more assets and economic indicators. “The report is a communications tool to help people feel good about their region as well as identify areas that need continued attention. It’s a report card.”

KIDS CAN JOIN THE FUN OF THE BLUE RIDGE MARATHON

The National College Blue Ridge Marathon on the parkway is just about two months away! To date, 485 people have registered to run or walk in the marathon and half marathon. National College leads the list of sponsors.

Earlier this month, the Blue Ridge Marathon, in cooperation with the YMCA of Roanoke Valley and Chick-fil-A, created an opportunity for children to participate. The YMCA Kids Marathon is a non-timed and non-competitive event for young runners, walkers and active youth in kindergarten through fifth grade. More than 30 children have already registered!



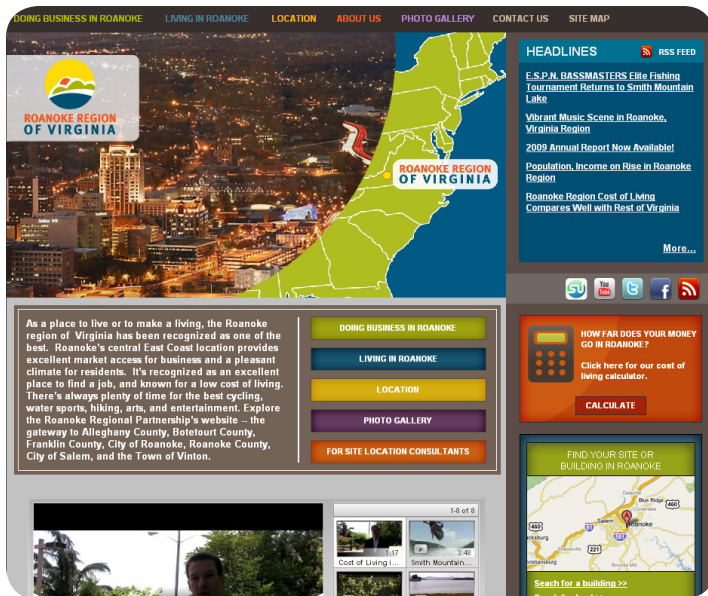
Participating children will complete 25.2 miles on their own or with family, friends or classmates prior to Race Day. On April 24, - with a team of volunteers cheering them on - all participants will complete the last mile together beginning at the Kirk Family YMCA, run through the streets of downtown Roanoke (the roads will be closed to all traffic) and finish at the Blue Ridge Marathon finish line behind the Taubman Museum of Art. Each YMCA Kids Marathon runner or walker will cross the same finish line as the elite athletes participating in the Blue Ridge Marathon later that morning.



Marathon organizers are still looking for sponsors and volunteers. Click on the links or call 444.4422

EXPLORE WHAT'S NEW AT ROANOKE.ORG

Have you visited www.roanoke.org lately? The Roanoke Regional Partnership's website relaunched this month with a fresh, new homepage.



"We've optimized it to make it easier to navigate and more effective for visitors," said Beth Doughty, executive director. "We want people to get the most out of the information we have to offer."

Other new and easily accessible features on the homepage include a tab for site selection consultants, YouTube videos, a Cost of Living Calculator and an entrance to our interactive site and building search database. There's also a place for visitors to sign up for our newsletter, Horizon.

Like the previous version, the website is divided into "Living in Roanoke" and "Doing Business in Roanoke" sections, as well as sections on location and the partnership, and a photo gallery. Tabs along the top and in a center section make navigation easy.

Click on "Living in Roanoke" and find information about restaurants, attractions, schools and housing. "Doing Business

in Roanoke" offers community data, workforce information and retail intelligence. "About Us" features a brief history of the Partnership, access to back issues of Investor Insider, a searchable data base of our investors, a way to request information from us and access to our Facebook fan page.

"This is not an electronic brochure," said Doughty, "but a comprehensive interactive guide for visitors to the material that interests them."

A RESOURCE FOR YOU

Put a link to Roanoke.org on your homepage and let us be a resource for your employees, potential employees, customers and suppliers.

And follow us everywhere:

Facebook, Wikipedia, Twitter and our Blog

That's News To Us

A *Washington Post* reporter recently visited the Roanoke Region, where she took in the Taubman Museum of Art, the Mill Mountain Star and the Roanoke City Market and gave the region a thumb's up.

She also reviewed Hotel Roanoke.

Southern Living's March issue highlights the Roanoker Restaurant as one of the "5 Best Breakfasts in Virginia" in its Mid-Atlantic Living section.