



JANUARY 2010

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON ROANOKEOUTSIDE.COM

It's up! The Roanoke Regional Partnership earlier this month launched RoanokeOutside.com – the most comprehensive and interactive resource on the region's outdoors.

The new website -- the first of its kind dedicated to the Roanoke, Virginia region -- was developed with hundreds of suggestions from area residents who shared their favorite hiking and biking trails, fishing holes, camping spots, kid activities, gear shops, as well as features they wanted to see on the site. Others employed GPS-equipped phones to map out trails and wrote descriptions of outdoor activities.

RoanokeOutside.com covers the greater Roanoke, Virginia area that stretches from Douthat State Park to Smith Mountain Lake between the James River and New River. The site includes an event calendar, suggested itineraries, list of guides, gear rentals, maps, photos, videos, message boards, blogs, gear reviews, cabin rentals, classifieds, and other features to help make getting outside easy, educational and sustainable.



“With the help of outdoor enthusiasts from throughout our region, we have dedicated more than a year to develop the leading source of information about all things outside to properly leverage the Roanoke, Virginia region’s greatest asset – the outdoors,” said Beth Doughty, executive director of the Roanoke Regional Partnership. “Making the outdoors an important part of our region’s narrative and economy starts with a dynamic Web site that catalogues our natural resources and makes it easier for people all over the world to learn about and enjoy what we have to offer.”

It was made possible thanks to a \$25,000 grant from the Virginia Tourism Corporation’s Virginia Is for Lovers Marketing Leverage Program.

How RoanokeOutside.com Can Work for You

Add a link to www.RoanokeOutside.com to your home page.

“Our new site is an ideal way to show young professionals that the Roanoke Region is an ideal place to start and build their careers,” says Pete Eshelman, director of outdoor branding for the Roanoke Regional Partnership. “Having a comprehensive site like ours makes it easy for young professionals to research the region as a place they want to live.”

RoanokeOutside.com also is a great way for employers to showcase the region’s assets to employees, potential recruits and other web visitors. “A link to RoanokeOutside.com shows that a company, college or other organization cares about the outdoors and its impact on economic development in the region,” Eshelman says.

Much like RoanokeOutside.com was developed with the help of the region’s residents; the site will continue to be a conduit of connectivity using interactive blogs, discussion groups and social media outreach using Twitter and Facebook.

“The Roanoke, Virginia region is one of the best spots anywhere for outdoor recreation, and RoanokeOutside.com tells that story in a way we’ve never been able to do before,” said Pete Eshelman, director of outdoor branding for the Roanoke Regional Partnership. “It provides an interactive platform to continue to share tips and connect with people passionate about the outdoors or those simply wanting to take the first steps toward getting outside for fun and exercise.”

Awareness builds awareness. Success builds success.

Word is getting out about the Roanoke Region. The area, its attractions and businesses have been mentioned in publications as varied as the Wall Street Journal, Southern Living, the Dallas Morning News and Progressive Farmer. In fact, we had 20 major media mentions in 2009.

Moody's Economy.com cited last fall's article in Business Facilities, which touted the region's diverse economy, low unemployment and rising home prices, in a recent metro analysis.

Traffic to our website, www.roanoke.org, has exploded: from an estimated 9,500 visitors in 2008 to 56,656 last year. Our Facebook fan page started the year with 220 fans and ended it with 1,180.

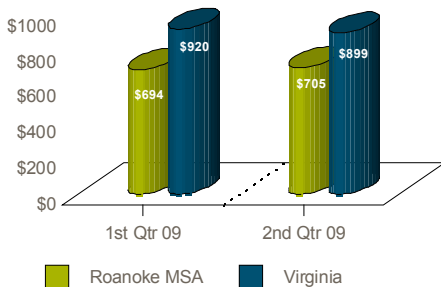
IMAGE BUILDING SCORESHEET		
	2008	2009
Major Media Mentions	5	20
"Best of" Lists	n/a	10
Roanoke.org Visitors	9,500	56,656
Roanoke Region Facebook Fans	220	1,180
Roanoke Region Twitter Followers	0	725
Roanoke Region Tweets	0	386
Roanoke Outside Facebook Group Members	0	1,031
Roanoke Outside Twitter Followers	0	1,094
Roanoke Outside Tweets	0	900

FOLLOW US EVERYWHERE
Check us out online:
Facebook, Wikipedia, Twitter and our Blog

UPS AND DOWNS POINT TO STABILIZING ECONOMY

The Roanoke Region's economy is showing signs of stabilizing and improving. Home prices are up from a year ago and so are wages. Unemployment rates are down from the highs this summer, as is foreclosure activity.

Wage Rates



The average home price, according to the Roanoke Valley Association of REALTORS®, ended the year higher than January and much higher than December 2008. This December's \$197,748 was 3.7 percent higher than January and 15.4% higher than a year ago.

On the flip side, foreclosure filings reported by RealtyTrac have stabilized over the past few months. The number of filings dropped dramatically (33.6%) from October to November after rising for four months. November's 93 filings remained fairly stable in December at 95. The region has stayed well below the national average.

Unemployment also has leveled out. The rate began falling in July from June's high of 7.8 percent. The November rate of 7.1 is just a tick up from 7.0 in October. Wages in the region for the second quarter of 2009 (most recent available) are

higher than they were a year before (\$705 versus \$692) and up from the previous quarter. Virginia, on the other hand, saw wages drop from \$920 in the first quarter to \$899.

ANNUAL REPORT TO INVESTORS

Thursday, February 4, 2010
5-7:00 p.m.
Hotel Roanoke
No charge to our investors
RSVP to info@roanoke.org
Underwritten by:



SPILMAN THOMAS & BATTLE, PLLC
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

That's News To Us

CNNmoney.com listed Roanoke County as the ninth Best Place for Jobs. It earlier had named Roanoke County community Cave Spring as one of its 100 Best Places to Live.

Blue Ridge Outdoors magazine, a guide to outdoor sports, health and adventure in the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic named four local favorites to their 2010 "Best of the Outdoors" list.

A New York Times article Sunday, January 3, featured a revolutionary new bearing from Synchrony, a company founded and grown by Dr. Victor Iannello in the Roanoke, Virginia area.