



Updates from the Office of Economic Development

Build Your Future at NextGen Skilled Trades Day



The City of Charlottesville's Office of Economic Development is excited to announce that NextGen Skilled Trades Day will be held on Saturday, October 4, 2025, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at Piedmont Virginia Community College. This free, community-wide event is designed to introduce high school students, families, educators, and jobseekers to the rewarding career opportunities available in the skilled trades.

The skilled trades are the backbone of every community—supporting everything from new housing and schools to clean energy and advanced manufacturing. In Charlottesville and across Central Virginia, demand is growing rapidly for electricians, HVAC technicians, welders, carpenters, electric vehicle technicians and other

trade professionals. These careers not only provide strong wages and job security but also offer opportunities for creativity, problem-solving, and advancement.

Yet, many young people and career changers don't get the chance to fully explore these options early enough to see them as viable and inspiring career paths. NextGen Skilled Trades Day was created to change that.

Participants will enjoy an interactive, fun and educational event that brings the trades to life. The day will feature:

- Hands-on activities and demonstrations where you can try out real tools and equipment in a safe, engaging environment.
- Meet-and-greets with local employers who are eager to share information about open positions, training opportunities, and long-term career pathways.
- School and career counselors available to provide guidance on certifications, apprenticeships, and educational programs that connect students to in-demand careers.

Whether you're a student exploring your future, a parent supporting a child's career interests, or a jobseeker considering a career change, NextGen Skilled Trades Day has something for you.

"NextGen Skilled Trades Day is all about safely exploring careers that are in high demand—while having fun doing it," said Todd Parks, Senior Director of Academic Support Services at PVCC. "It's a rare chance to actually get your hands on tools, talk to the people who do the work every day, and see what these careers are really like."

Local employers also recognize the value. For them, the event is not just about recruiting talent—it's about inspiring the next generation to see the trades as meaningful, innovative, and essential careers.

Why You Should Attend

- It's free. There's no cost to attend, and everyone is welcome.
- It's interactive. You'll have the chance to learn by doing, not just by listening.
- It's relevant. The skills you'll see in action are the same ones shaping the future of Charlottesville's economy.
- It could change your future. Many people discover their passion for the trades only after

experiencing them firsthand.

Don't miss this opportunity to explore the trades, connect with local employers, and build your future. NextGen Skilled Trades Day is more than an event—it's a launching pad for careers that matter.

Register [here](#) to reserve your spot today!

Downtown Mall 50th Anniversary

Stay tuned...the Charlottesville Downtown Mall is turning 50 next year, July 2026, and we want to celebrate this milestone anniversary with a series of events and activities. From the planning for and design history of the renowned landscape architect and environmental planner Lawrence Halprin whose vision came to life on our Downtown Mall, to the important changes and milestones that have shaped the Mall over 50 years, to just plain having fun in the classic CVille manner in the heart of our downtown; next year is going to be a CELEBRATION.

We are launching a planning effort to start to build toward all of the events, activities, commemorations, and celebrations.

So get ready to mark your calendar, mark the whole year, as we will be making this very special celebration last!!

Welcoming New Ready To Work Employers

The City of Charlottesville's Office of Economic Development is pleased to welcome three new partners to the Ready to Work program: Bright Horizons Child Care Center, Graduate by Hilton Hotel, and At Home Care Staffing. By joining the network of participating employers, these organizations are helping to expand career opportunities for local job seekers while building their own pipelines of skilled, job-ready talent.

Ready to Work is a free workforce training program designed to help job seekers strengthen essential soft skills and prepare for long-term career success. Participants complete courses in business communication, teamwork, self-awareness, problem-solving, and professional mindset, while also receiving support with resumes, cover letters, and interview preparation.

Graduates who successfully complete the program become Ready to Work Certified—a credential that signals to employers that a candidate has the professional skills needed to succeed in the workplace. Every graduate is guaranteed an interview with a participating Ready to Work employer, ensuring that their training leads directly to real opportunities.

Employers like Bright Horizons Child Care Center, Graduate by Hilton Hotel, and At Home Care Staffing join the other nine participating Ready to Work employers, who play a vital role in making the Ready to Work program successful. By committing to interview program graduates, they not only strengthen their workforce with employees who are motivated and well-prepared, but also contribute to the broader mission of building a stronger, more equitable local economy.

With the addition of these new employers, the Ready to Work network continues to grow, creating more pathways for job seekers to enter meaningful careers. Whether in early childhood education, the trades, hospitality, or healthcare, these partnerships demonstrate the wide range of industries ready to benefit from local talent.

We look forward to celebrating the success stories that will come from these new collaborations—and to continuing to connect job seekers with the tools, training, and opportunities they need to thrive.

To learn more about Ready to Work and enroll, [click here](#).

Planning for Success(ion)

As a business owner, you plan for success. After all,





nobody starts a business with hopes it will fail. This is part of the reason you create a business plan, run profit & loss statements, focus on marketing efforts, develop a loyal customer base, find different ways to grow and diversify your business, and the list goes on. But while you're planning for success, are you also planning for succession?

Succession planning is one of the more often overlooked aspects of running a business that is extremely critical for its long-term viability. While you may think of succession planning in terms of what you

would like to see happen when you, as the business owner, choose to retire or step down from your role with company, it also means planning for the unexpected whether that be unforeseen death, debilitating injury, or a need for you to change your focus away from the business that you were not expecting. It also is not limited to only being applicable for business ownership. As your business grows so too does your reliance upon other key individuals within the company. How will you ensure your business' success if one of those people suddenly leaves the company? Once you stop to think about all the "what if" scenarios, it becomes pretty clear why succession planning is so important for your business.

So, what's next? You see the true value of succession planning and you're ready to get started but aren't exactly sure where to start. A quick search of the internet or an inquiry to your favorite AI program will give you a wealth of information related to ways to begin your succession planning journey but here are some basic steps to take:

- Determine which roles in the business are critical to its long-term success.
- Clearly identify and document the responsibilities of each role, along with the knowledge, skills and actions required to fulfill these responsibilities.
- Identify whether there are individuals already within the company who may be poised to move into a new role if someone unexpectedly vacates the position.
- Talk with individuals currently in these roles to see if they anticipate moving on in a planned exit, and if so, what that timeline looks like.

If you would like to talk more with someone about what succession planning looks like for your business, consider reaching out to the **Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)** and ask to be paired with a mentor who has familiarity with succession planning. Help secure the success of your business over time by planning for succession!

Business Spotlight: Stock Provisions

For the past twelve years, Stock Provisions, a local whole animal butchery, has built its reputation on quality, sustainability, and community connection. It is owned by local cattle farmer Calder Kegley and managed by General Manager Alex Import.



The reason why they chose their space, Alex stated, "Location, location, location. The Space is the perfect size and look. When we opened, Main Street was still reestablishing itself. Today, it's a vibrant stretch with great restaurants and shops from end to end. Also perfectly sandwiched between downtown and the university."

Customers know Stock Provisions for many things. Some say they make the best ham biscuits in the city, while others appreciate their deep respect for animals and the environment. With quality and nutrition as guiding pillars, they focus on animal-welfare-minded sourcing and feeding the community with the best intentions.

Over the years, Alex has learned important lessons about running a small business. "Don't overthink it, just do it. Take care of your people and take care of your customers". He is grateful for a great team; he shared that they keep everything afloat.

Charlottesville has shown unwavering support from the beginning. Many of the shop's best customers are the same ones who came through the doors on opening week, sticking with them through the ups and downs that come with running a business. "The Charlottesville community's support is just ride or die".

One of the most memorable moments came when they reopened after COVID. "It was a clear confirmation that anything is possible and that our community truly wants what we offer," Alex reflected.

Alex admits that capacity is always a challenge, but they would love to do more collaborations with local companies. "We have to prioritize and find the balance that works best for our crew and know our limits." Still, they've managed to create meaningful partnerships with businesses like 2 Birds with their line of candles and Al-di la Soap.

What keeps Alex and his team motivated is simple – knowing they can't keep everyone happy but striving every day to do their best. For up-and-coming entrepreneurs, Alex offers this advice, "Think everything through and then think it through again. Never give up and keep being kind. Lastly, remember you get out what you put in."

Be sure to visit **Stock Provisions** at 709 West Main Street, check out their new website, and sign up for the newsletter. Don't forget to place your orders now for the holidays because they're right around the corner and Stock Provisions' seasonal offerings are not to be missed!

OED Fun Fact

9/11, Patriot Day, where we honor the memory of the nearly 3,000 innocent victims who died in the September 11, 2001, terrorists attacks. Each year Americans dedicate this day to remembering those who died and the first responders who risked their own lives to save others. #PatriotDay

Free Business Resources



The Central Virginia Small Business Development Center is a team of business and technical experts available to advise and assist entrepreneurs, confidentially and free of charge. They offer 1:1 assistance, curated research, access to technical experts and professionals, and timely events/training. To see upcoming SBDC events, click [here!](#)

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