

## IV. Economy

### Introduction

Christiansburg and surrounding Montgomery County are joined inseparably in terms of their economies. Indeed, the economy of the New River Valley as a whole has great impacts on the Town of Christiansburg with cross-employment and cross-residency being very common. Christiansburg's large concentration of retail establishments makes it a destination for regional shopping. State and national economies can also affect Christiansburg in less pronounced ways, but overall downturns and upturns do ripple to the local level. While the Town of Christiansburg has no control over national economic trends, it can act to ensure its continued economic stability through diversification of employment, provision of a desirable business climate and quality workers, and marketing efforts.

### Employment

#### *Major Employers*

An analysis of employment and labor statistics provides an accurate indication of the vitality of a local economy as well as some insight into its potential for and direction of future growth. The major employers within the Town of Christiansburg corporate limits are as follows:

#### **Major Employers within the Town of Christiansburg (100 employees or more)**

<b>Employer</b>	<b>Number of Employees</b>
EchoStar (customer service center)	1,400
Montgomery County Public Schools (in Town)	676
Harvey Hubble, Inc. (lighting fixtures)	500
Wal-Mart	475
Shelor Automotive Group (automobile sales)	410
Montgomery County (in Town other than schools)	364
First National Bank of Christiansburg	318
Corning, Inc. (glass works)	300
Commonwealth of Virginia	234
Marshall Concrete	180
Town of Christiansburg	180
C and S Door Corporation	133
<b>Total employment accounted for</b>	<b>5,170</b>

Source: Town of Christiansburg, 2003 phone survey.

The major employers within Christiansburg are fairly diverse in nature, which should help to insulate the Town from downturns within a given industry. EchoStar's customer service center is the largest employer within Town with 1,400 employees.

### *Employment by Industry*

Employment by industry can provide a broad view of sector employment of a locality's citizenry. It can also serve as an indicator of a locality's susceptibility to changes within the economy. The Census employment by industry data is collected by place of residence and therefore represents jobs held by persons residing within the Town, not necessarily the jobs within the Town. According to the Census Bureau, the Town of Christiansburg accounted for 22.8% of Montgomery County's employed persons 16 years and over, with 7,821 of 34,250 in 1990 and again accounted for 22.8% with 8,992 of 39,369 in 2000.

In 2000, Christiansburg continued to have a considerable percentage of civilian persons 16 years and over employed in manufacturing (1,797 persons or 20.0%) compared to the County (14.0%), state (11.3%), and nation (14.1%). This is not as strong as 1990's figure of 1,980 jobs and percentage of 25.3%, but the shift away from manufacturing has been a national trend.

Closure and cutbacks at large regional employers such as the AT&T facility in Pulaski County, the Radford Army Ammunition Plant, Volvo in Dublin, Wolverine Gasket Company and Poly Scientific in Blacksburg, and the closure of Rowe Furniture within Christiansburg have resulted in the departure of a number of high-paying jobs from the region. It should be noted, however, that layoffs within the area have involved a large percentage of highly skilled workers whose availability creates an attractive labor market for potential manufacturing industries.

Retail trade is still a major employer in the Town of Christiansburg, accounting for 1,178 jobs or 13.1% of total employment for civilian persons 16 years and over. Given the large amount of commercial development within the Town of Christiansburg since the 1990 Census, it is perhaps a little surprising that retail trade appears to have declined in both number and percentage of jobs within Town from 1990 to 2000. The development of the Spradlin Farms area will increase the percentages of the retail trade sector as it opened after the 2000 Census was conducted.

There are special concerns for Downtown Christiansburg as loss of retailers and other activity has been a national trend that often accompanies larger commercial centers away from the traditional downtown areas. There have been several renovation projects in the downtown area, which suggests continued faith by local merchants in the downtown as a retail and service center. The Town's streetscaping project that is underway should help to solidify the viability of the downtown area.

Market studies for new area retailers have tended to project a market extending slightly beyond the New River Valley into Wythe, Carroll, Giles and Roanoke Counties. Retail closures have occurred primarily because of a shift in consumer tastes and center of population as well as due to relocation/centralization and national corporate failure. Due to

the concentration of service and retail employment and resultant retail sales tax revenues, any large layoff within these sectors would greatly impact the local economy.

Historic dependence upon manufacturing may also have a dampening effect upon the local retail market in face of manufacturing layoffs. The presence of large number of college students, however, has helped maintain retail trade particularly through purchases of nondurable goods and services.

**2000 Employment by Industry**  
**(Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over)**

	Town of Christiansburg		Montgomery County	New River Valley	Virginia	United States
Total:	8,992	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining:	29	0.3%	0.9%	1.4%	1.3%	1.9%
<i>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting</i>	-	0.0%	0.8%	1.2%	1.0%	1.5%
<i>Mining</i>	-	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%	0.4%
Construction	478	5.3%	4.8%	5.5%	7.3%	6.8%
Manufacturing	1,797	20.0%	14.0%	20.5%	11.3%	14.1%
Wholesale trade	166	1.8%	1.5%	1.8%	2.7%	3.6%
Retail trade	1,178	13.1%	11.2%	11.2%	11.4%	11.7%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities:	248	2.8%	2.7%	3.5%	4.6%	5.2%
<i>Transportation and warehousing</i>	205	2.3%	2.2%	2.7%	3.8%	4.3%
<i>Utilities</i>	43	0.5%	0.5%	0.7%	0.8%	0.9%
Information	132	1.5%	1.9%	1.7%	3.8%	3.1%
Finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing:	497	5.5%	3.7%	3.5%	6.6%	6.9%
<i>Finance and insurance</i>	348	3.9%	2.3%	2.3%	4.8%	5.0%
<i>Real estate and rental and leasing</i>	149	1.7%	1.4%	1.3%	1.8%	1.9%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services:	547	6.1%	7.5%	6.2%	11.6%	9.3%
<i>Professional, scientific, and technical services</i>	350	3.9%	5.8%	4.2%	8.3%	5.9%
<i>Management of companies and enterprises</i>	-	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
<i>Administrative and support and waste management services</i>	197	2.2%	1.8%	2.0%	3.3%	3.4%
Educational, health and social services:	2,587	28.8%	35.2%	29.3%	18.3%	19.9%
<i>Educational services</i>	1,682	18.7%	27.3%	20.6%	8.6%	8.8%
<i>Health care and social assistance</i>	905	10.1%	7.9%	8.7%	9.7%	11.2%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services:	561	6.2%	10.4%	8.5%	7.2%	7.9%
<i>Arts, entertainment, and recreation</i>	16	0.2%	1.4%	1.1%	1.5%	1.8%
<i>Accommodation and food services</i>	545	6.1%	8.9%	7.4%	5.7%	6.1%
Other services (except public administration)	431	4.8%	3.6%	3.7%	5.4%	4.9%
Public administration	341	3.8%	2.6%	3.2%	8.3%	4.8%
Employed civilian persons 16 years and over	8,992	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 3 (SF 3), Table P-49.

Educational services continued to be a large employer with 1,682 jobs or 18.7% of total employment for civilian persons 16 years and over in 2000. The high percentage of persons in the education sector is attributed to the presence of Virginia Tech and Radford University, which also account for the high number of state employees in the region. Additionally, over the past decade Montgomery County has experienced an increase in the elementary and secondary school age population, in keeping with the general population growth.

Trends suggest a continued rise in elementary and secondary educational employment. Traditionally, such employment has provided some stability to local economies during periods of economic downturn. Rising educational employment would tend to suggest that the local economy should stabilize further and lessen swings in unemployment. However, post secondary school populations are expected to decline over the next century with declines in family size and a slowing of economic growth. While school age population may continue to modestly increase, it is not expected to significantly impact employment in the future.

The Town of Christiansburg's 8,992 employed civilian persons 16 years and over accounted for 22.8% of Montgomery County's 39,369 total and 11.7% of the New River Valley's 76,942 total.

### *Employment by Occupation*

Employment by occupational classification is often an accurate reflection of local industries' contributions to the economy. The basis for this is the assumption that concentrations of employment in higher paying professions will result in a more vital local economy. The table on the following page illustrates 2000 employment by occupation. It should be noted that these are jobs held by residents, not necessarily jobs within the localities.

In 2000, managerial, professional and related occupations represented over a third (34.5%) of total employment of Christiansburg's residents. Montgomery County's percentage (40.2%) was even higher than the Town's, due in part to the location of Virginia Tech in Blacksburg. Percentages for the region, state, and nation were 33.4%, 38.2%, and 33.6% respectively.

Service occupations comprised 1,209 or 13.4% of the occupations of Christiansburg residents compared to 16.4% for Montgomery County, 16.0% for the New River Valley, 13.7% for Virginia, and 14.9% for the United States.

Sales and office occupations accounted for 2,327 jobs or 25.9% of Town resident jobs, which was higher than County, regional, and state percentages, but lower than national percentages. Production, transportation, and material moving occupations accounted for 1,471 or 16.4% of Town resident jobs, which was higher than County, state, and national percentages, but lower than the New River Valley's 17.8%.

**2000 Employment by Occupation  
(Employed civilian population 16 years and over)**

OCCUPATION		Town of Christiansburg	Montgomery County	New River Valley	Virginia	United States
<b>Management, professional, and related occupations:</b>		<b>3,099</b>	<b>34.5%</b>	<b>40.2%</b>	<b>33.4%</b>	<b>38.2%</b>
Management, business, and financial operations occupations:	984	10.9%	9.3%	9.1%	15.5%	13.5%
Professional and related occupations:	2,115	23.5%	30.9%	24.2%	22.7%	20.2%
<b>Service occupations:</b>		<b>1,209</b>	<b>13.4%</b>	<b>16.4%</b>	<b>16.0%</b>	<b>13.7%</b>
Healthcare support occupations	153	1.7%	1.8%	1.9%	1.6%	2.0%
Protective service occupations:	159	1.8%	1.3%	1.7%	2.1%	2.0%
Food preparation and serving related occupations	395	4.4%	7.6%	6.5%	4.3%	4.8%
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	214	2.4%	2.5%	3.1%	3.0%	3.3%
Personal care and service occupations	288	3.2%	3.2%	2.7%	2.7%	2.8%
<b>Sales and office occupations:</b>		<b>2,327</b>	<b>25.9%</b>	<b>22.2%</b>	<b>22.6%</b>	<b>25.5%</b>
Sales and related occupations	931	10.4%	9.4%	9.3%	10.5%	11.2%
Office and administrative support occupations	1,396	15.5%	12.8%	13.3%	14.9%	15.4%
<b>Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations</b>		<b>17</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>
<b>Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations:</b>		<b>869</b>	<b>9.7%</b>	<b>8.2%</b>	<b>9.5%</b>	<b>9.6%</b>
Construction and extraction occupations:	430	4.8%	4.2%	5.0%	5.8%	5.5%
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	439	4.9%	3.9%	4.5%	3.9%	3.9%
<b>Production, transportation, and material moving occupations:</b>		<b>1,471</b>	<b>16.4%</b>	<b>12.7%</b>	<b>17.8%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>
Production occupations	1,062	11.8%	8.4%	12.5%	7.0%	8.5%
Transportation and material moving occupations:	409	4.5%	4.3%	5.3%	5.5%	6.1%
Total employed civilian population 16 years and over	8,992	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, Summary File 3, Table P50.

*Travel Time to Work*

Christiansburg workers enjoy relatively short commutes to work as evidenced by the following table. Only 1,700 workers, or 19.0%, had a travel time to work of 30 or more minutes. This is fairly close to Montgomery County's percentage of 19.5%, but much lower than the regional, state, and national figures. Christiansburg's large job base, accompanied by a transportation system with relatively small amount of congestion for an urbanized area, help to contribute to this short travel time.

**2000 Travel Time to Work for Workers 16 Years and Over**

	Town of Christiansburg	Montgomery County	New River Valley	Virginia	United States
Worked at home	250 2.8%	3.0%	2.8%	3.2%	3.3%
Did not work at home:	8,704 97.2%	97.0%	97.2%	96.8%	96.7%
Less than 15 minutes	2,985 33.3%	41.2%	37.6%	23.8%	28.4%
15 to 29 minutes	4,019 44.9%	36.3%	34.3%	36.2%	34.9%
30 or more minutes	1,700 19.0%	19.5%	25.2%	36.8%	33.4%
Total workers 16 years and over	8,954 100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3, Table P31.

### Regional Employment and Commuting Patterns

The following tables illustrate employment commuting patterns for workers into and out of Montgomery County for 2000. The 2000 Census reported 29,589 persons living and working in Montgomery County. This figure, coupled with the 10,319 in-commuters would account for a total of 39,908 workers employed in the County. Additionally, it would yield a total of 38,330 employed workers living within Montgomery County (including the 8,741 out-commuters).

The data indicates that the majority of Montgomery County's labor force, 77.2%, is employed within the County. Montgomery County is the dominant employment center for the New River Valley and draws many workers from other New River Valley jurisdictions (with Pulaski County, Giles County, Radford City, and Floyd County accounting for 7,218 in-commuters or 69.9% of all in-commuters). Due to the high concentration of commercial and industrial employment in Town, Christiansburg is Montgomery County's primary employment location exclusive of educational jobs. Although the County's public school system is headquartered within the Town, the location of Virginia Tech within the Town of Blacksburg shifts educational employment to Blacksburg. There were 1,242 in-commuters from Roanoke County, Roanoke City, and Salem City combined, which accounts for 12.0% all Montgomery County in-commutation.

#### 2000 In-Commuting Patterns – Montgomery County

Commuting From:	Workers	Percent
Pulaski County, VA	2,248	21.8%
Giles County, VA	1,933	18.7%
Radford City, VA	1,785	17.3%
Floyd County, VA	1,252	12.1%
Roanoke County, VA	534	5.2%
Roanoke City, VA	492	4.8%
Craig County, VA	266	2.6%
Salem City, VA	216	2.1%
Wythe County, VA	165	1.6%
Monroe County, WV	162	1.6%
Mercer County, WV	119	1.2%
Fairfax County, VA	116	1.1%
Carroll County, VA	94	0.9%
Botetourt County, VA	82	0.8%
Franklin County, VA	71	0.7%
Bedford County, VA	70	0.7%
Grayson County, VA	41	0.4%
<b>Total In-Commuters</b>	<b>10,319</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: 2000 Census.

Note: Commuting representing less than 2/10 of 1% are not shown but are included in the total.

Virginia Tech has over 6,000 full-time employees and over 10,000 total employees (though over 3,000 of the part-time workers are students). Considering Virginia Tech, from direct employment, student population, tourism generation and indirect employment, the magnitude of its contribution to the New River and Roanoke Valleys is immense. However, given the small number of job commuters from the Roanoke Valley, it would appear that the overwhelming economic inputs of Virginia Tech are to Montgomery County and the New River Valley.

Out-commuting from Montgomery County is more balanced between the New River Valley and the Roanoke Valley. There were 4,186 out-commuters to other New River Valley localities, accounting for 47.9% of all Montgomery County out-commuters. Roanoke City, Salem City, and Roanoke County combined as the destination for 3,384 Montgomery County out-commuters or 38.7% of all out-commutation. Montgomery County is not surprisingly more a source of workers than of a destination for employment in its relationship with the more urbanized Roanoke Valley. Montgomery County, however, is in a reverse situation with the less urbanized New River Valley and appears to be tied much more closely, in terms of employment, to the New River Valley.

### 2000 Out-Commuting Patterns – Montgomery County

Commuting To:	Workers	Percent
Pulaski County, VA	1,872	21.4%
Radford City, VA	1,840	21.1%
Roanoke City, VA	1,199	13.7%
Salem City, VA	1,149	13.1%
Roanoke County, VA	1,036	11.9%
Floyd County, VA	249	2.8%
Giles County, VA	225	2.6%
Patrick County, VA	64	0.7%
Botetourt County, VA	55	0.6%
Albemarle County, VA	47	0.5%
Fairfax County, VA	42	0.5%
Chesterfield County, VA	40	0.5%
<b>Total Out-Commuters</b>	<b>8,741</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: 2000 Census.

Note: Commuting representing less than 2/10 of 1% are not shown but are included in the total.

To take a closer look at commutation from the Town, the table on the following page displays the place of work for workers 16 years and over from the Town of Christiansburg. Of the 8,954 total workers 16 years and over, 6,583 or 73.5% are employed within Montgomery County and only 60 (0.7%) were employed out of state. Christiansburg's centralized location within Montgomery County, as well as the large assortment of employment opportunities, contributes to the large numbers of persons from Town remaining within the County for employment.

**Town of Christiansburg 2000 Place of Work for Workers 16 Years and Over  
-- State and County Level**

	Total	Percent
Worked in Virginia	8,894	99.3%
Worked in Montgomery County	6,583	73.5%
Worked outside of Montgomery County, but in Virginia	2,311	25.8%
Worked outside Virginia	60	0.7%
Workers 16 years and over	8,954	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census Summary File 3 (SF 3) - Sample Data.

*Current Employment*

The Virginia Employment Commission maintains a database of the civilian labor force, employment, unemployment, and unemployment rates. The data is tracked by the population within all jurisdictions and compiled at the County level. The data therefore represents the employment patterns of residents within the jurisdictions rather than employment within the localities.

Virginia Employment Commission data for 2002 indicates a civilian labor force of 39,529 persons for Montgomery County. Unemployment for 2002 was 1,074 for a corresponding unemployment rate of 2.7%. The percentage of unemployed individuals in Montgomery County has been consistently lower than regional, state (with the exception of 1993), and national figures over the past decade. Montgomery County's 2002 unemployment rate is the lowest unemployment rate in the New River Valley (with 2002 rates of 3.6% for Floyd County, 5.7% for Giles County, 6.8% for Pulaski County, and 4.5% for Radford City).

The decrease in unemployment over the past decade may be attributed, in part, to continued commercial development along North Franklin Street. New business openings are fairly common. Improvements have also been noted within manufacturing, and new development has resulted in increases in construction employment. Montgomery County's shell building program has also been successful in attracting new manufacturing and distribution industries to the County's industrial parks. In addition to large business growth, the Town and County both continue to experience increases in the number of small and single person businesses.

The presence of Virginia Tech and Radford University add stability to the employment base, with relative insulation to economic downturns that are experienced within the private sector. They are both, however, state supported institutions and subject to state budgetary constraints.

With 39,529 of 74,909 of the New River Valley's total civilian labor force, Montgomery County residents accounted for 52.8% of the region's labor force in 2002.

**1993 - 2002 Civilian Labor Force, Employment,  
Unemployment, and Unemployment Rates**

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
<b>Civilian Labor Force</b>					
Montgomery County	37,003	36,807	37,368	36,654	36,413
New River Valley	76,197	75,253	76,489	74,968	73,991
Virginia	3,379,900	3,416,661	3,482,244	3,390,838	3,408,142
United States	128,040,000	131,056,000	132,304,000	133,943,000	136,297,000
<b>Total Employment</b>					
Montgomery County	35,039	35,389	36,162	35,344	35,492
New River Valley	70,975	71,313	72,998	70,837	71,153
Virginia	3,207,393	3,250,202	3,325,234	3,241,326	3,273,222
United States	119,306,000	123,060,000	124,900,000	126,708,000	129,558,000
<b>Total Unemployment</b>					
Montgomery County	1,964	1,418	1,206	1,310	921
New River Valley	5,222	3,940	3,491	4,131	2,838
Virginia	172,507	166,459	157,010	149,512	134,920
United States	8,734,000	7,996,000	7,404,000	7,236,000	6,739,000
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>					
Montgomery County	5.3%	3.9%	3.2%	3.6%	2.5%
New River Valley	6.9%	5.2%	4.6%	5.5%	3.8%
Virginia	5.1%	4.9%	4.5%	4.4%	4.0%
United States	6.8%	6.1%	5.6%	5.4%	4.9%
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
<b>Civilian Labor Force</b>					
Montgomery County	36,972	37,629	38,795	39,001	39,529
New River Valley	74,789	76,344	76,739	77,837	78,160
Virginia	3,487,418	3,528,041	3,603,771	3,680,395	3,735,394
United States	137,673,000	139,368,000	142,583,000	143,734,000	144,863,000
<b>Total Employment</b>					
Montgomery County	36,253	36,934	38,123	37,838	38,455
New River Valley	72,414	73,894	74,114	73,708	74,909
Virginia	3,385,677	3,429,908	3,524,677	3,555,720	3,583,240
United States	131,463,000	133,488,000	136,891,000	136,933,000	136,485,000
<b>Total Unemployment</b>					
Montgomery County	719	695	672	1,163	1,074
New River Valley	2,375	2,450	2,625	4,129	3,251
Virginia	101,741	98,133	79,094	124,675	152,154
United States	6,210,000	5,880,000	5,692,000	6,801,000	8,378,000
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>					
Montgomery County	1.9%	1.8%	1.7%	3.0%	2.7%
New River Valley	3.2%	3.2%	3.4%	5.3%	4.2%
Virginia	2.9%	2.8%	2.2%	3.4%	4.1%
United States	4.5%	4.2%	4.0%	4.7%	5.8%

Source: Virginia's Electronic Labor Market Access, Virginia Employment Commission, July 29, 2003.

## Educational Attainment

Educational attainment impacts employment levels, affects wages, and adds to the attraction of an areas labor market. The following table provides educational attainment data. The Town of Christiansburg has 2,090 (18.1%) persons 25 years and over with less than a high school degree, compared to 17.2% for the County, 21.6% for the New River Valley, 18.5% for the state, and 19.6% for the nation. The Town of Christiansburg is fairly comparable as a whole, but the percentage of persons 25 years and over with an Associate degree (8.9%) is slightly higher than County, regional, state, and national figures. Montgomery County's figures, particularly the percentages with Bachelor's degrees and with Master's, professional school, or doctorate degrees, are greatly affected by the presence of Virginia Tech in Blacksburg.

### 2000 Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Over

	Town of Christiansburg		Montgomery County	New River Valley	Virginia	United States
Less than high school graduate	2,090	18.1%	17.2%	21.6%	18.5%	19.6%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	3,035	26.3%	23.7%	29.7%	26.0%	28.6%
Some college, no degree	2,485	21.5%	17.5%	18.1%	20.4%	21.0%
Associate degree	1,029	8.9%	5.7%	6.3%	5.6%	6.3%
Bachelor's degree	1,849	16.0%	17.3%	12.8%	17.9%	15.5%
Master's, professional school, or doctorate degree	1,047	9.1%	18.6%	11.6%	11.6%	8.9%
Total population 25 years and over	11,535	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3, Table P37.

## Income and Poverty Status

### *Income*

Income can be a useful measurement of the financial stability of an area and its citizens. However, regional factors such as housing costs, utility costs, etc. (and the resulting disposable income) can play a large role in the usefulness of these figures. The relatively low cost of living in Christiansburg should be remembered when comparing the income figures for the area to the state and nation.

The 1999 median household income for Christiansburg was \$40,851, compared to \$32,330 for Montgomery County, \$46,677 for Virginia, and \$41,994 for the nation. The 1999 median family income for Christiansburg was \$47,428 and the 1999 per capita income was \$19,579. Median household income and per capita income figures are skewed for Montgomery County as they include the incomes of the Virginia Tech student population. Not surprisingly, the state figures are higher due to the higher income regions of northern Virginia, Richmond, and the Tidewater area. The increases in income in

Christiansburg from 1989 to 1999 were dramatic when compared to the County, state, and nation. In Christiansburg, median household income rose by 56.1%, median family income rose by 50.7%, and per capita income rose by 62.5%.

**1989 and 1999 Median Household Income,  
Median Family Income, and Per Capita Income**

	Town of Christiansburg	Montgomery County	Virginia	United States
1989 median household income	\$26,171	\$22,949	\$33,328	\$30,056
1989 median family income	\$31,468	\$32,128	\$38,213	\$35,225
1989 per capita income	\$12,045	\$10,979	\$15,713	\$14,420
1999 median household income	\$40,851	\$32,330	\$46,677	\$41,994
1999 median family income	\$47,428	\$47,239	\$54,169	\$50,046
1999 per capita income	\$19,579	\$17,077	\$23,975	\$21,587
% change in median household income, 1989 to 1999	56.1%	40.9%	40.1%	39.7%
% change in median family income, 1989 to 1999	50.7%	47.0%	41.8%	42.1%
% change in per capita income, 1989 to 1999	62.5%	55.5%	52.6%	49.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing Summary Tape File 3A and 2000 Census Summary File 3.

*Poverty Status*

The following table presents Poverty Status figures for the Town. As shown, the percentage of Christiansburg's population below poverty level is significantly lower than percentages found for the County and State. It should be noted that the County percentages include the large number of Virginia Tech students with relatively low incomes.

Since 1980, there has been a slight decrease in the percentage of persons and families below poverty level. This decrease may be attributed to an increase in commercial and service job opportunities within the Town during this time period.

**Ratio of Income in 1999 to Poverty Level**

Ratio of Income in 1999 to Poverty Level (Population for whom poverty status is determined)	Town of Christiansburg		Montgomery County	New River Valley	Virginia	United States
Under .50	519	3.1%	12.6%	9.9%	4.3%	5.6%
.50 to .74	403	2.4%	6.0%	4.8%	2.4%	3.1%
.75 to .99	503	3.0%	4.7%	4.4%	2.8%	3.7%
1.00 to 1.24	547	3.3%	4.3%	4.2%	3.4%	4.1%
1.25 to 1.49	609	3.6%	4.2%	4.9%	3.8%	4.4%
1.50 to 1.74	629	3.8%	3.9%	4.2%	3.9%	4.3%
1.75 to 1.84	333	2.0%	2.3%	2.2%	1.7%	1.9%
1.85 to 1.99	643	3.8%	2.8%	2.9%	2.3%	2.5%
2.00 and over	12,531	75.0%	59.2%	62.5%	75.3%	70.4%
Persons for whom poverty status is determined	16,717	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Persons below poverty level	1,425	8.5%	23.2%	19.1%	9.6%	12.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) - Sample Data, Table P88.

Based on 1990 Census data, Christiansburg had 1,616 persons or 10.9% of its population below poverty level in 1989 (compared to 22.1% for Montgomery County, 19.1% for the New River Valley, 10.2% for Virginia, and 13.1% for the United States). The 2000 Census data showed declines in both persons below poverty level (dropping to 1,425 persons) and percent of population below poverty level (falling to 8.5%) for Christiansburg in 1999. Christiansburg's 8.5% percent of population below poverty level compares favorably to Montgomery County (23.2%), the New River Valley (19.1%), state (9.6%), and nation (12.4)%.

Poverty status for families is often of particular concern, due in part to the potential presence of children. The following table illustrates that Christiansburg had 307 families with income in 1999 below poverty level accounting for 6.4% of all families. Again, these figures are lower than County, regional, state, and national percentages. It should be noted that Christiansburg has a larger percentage of female householders with income below poverty level than the County, region, state, and nation.

**Poverty Status in 1999 of Families by Family Type by Presence of Related Children Under 18 Years by Age of Related Children**

	Town of Christiansburg		Montgomery County	New River Valley	Virginia	United States
<b>Income in 1999 below poverty level:</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>9.2%</b>
<i>Married-couple family:</i>	75	1.6%	4.2%	4.1%	2.6%	3.8%
With related children under 18 years	62	1.3%	2.6%	2.2%	1.5%	2.4%
Under 5 years only	23	0.5%	0.8%	0.7%	0.3%	0.5%
<i>Other family:</i>	232	4.8%	4.7%	4.8%	4.4%	5.4%
Male householder, no wife present:	5	0.1%	0.8%	0.9%	0.6%	0.8%
With related children under 18 years	5	0.1%	0.2%	0.5%	0.4%	0.6%
Under 5 years only	5	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%
Female householder, no husband present:	227	4.7%	3.9%	3.8%	3.8%	4.6%
With related children under 18 years	200	4.1%	3.3%	3.3%	3.4%	4.1%
Under 5 years only	77	1.6%	0.9%	1.0%	0.7%	0.8%
<b>Income in 1999 at or above poverty level:</b>	<b>4,517</b>	<b>93.6%</b>	<b>91.2%</b>	<b>91.2%</b>	<b>93.0%</b>	<b>90.8%</b>
Total Families	4,824	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) - Sample Data, Table P90.

**Business Licenses**

The Town of Christiansburg issued 1,463 Business Licenses in 2002. Historic Business License data indicate a steady increase in the total number of business licenses issued over the past decade. Employment opportunities over the long term should continue to increase due to the desirable business environment the area offers, entrepreneurship, and efforts of local governments and economic development agencies.

There were a total of 300 or 20.5% of all Business Licenses issued for contractors in 2002; this figure would include a large number of contractors with offices outside Town but doing

work in Town. A total of 72 Business Licenses (4.9%) were issued for alcoholic beverage sales, which would include on-premises and off-premises sales.

### 2002 Town of Christiansburg Business Licenses

Type of Business License	Number	Percent
Contractor – Class A	163	11.1%
Contractor – Class B	55	3.8%
Contractor – Class C	41	2.8%
Contractor – General	41	2.8%
Retail	454	31.0%
Wholesale	35	2.4%
Professional/Real Estate	191	13.1%
Personal Business Service	265	18.1%
Repair/Service	101	6.9%
Mixed Alcohol (50-100)	4	0.3%
Mixed Alcohol (101-150)	3	0.2%
Mixed Alcohol (151-up)	10	0.7%
Beer (On-premises)	4	0.3%
Beer (Off-premises)	11	0.8%
Beer/Wine (On-premises)	15	1.0%
Beer/Wine (Off-premises)	19	1.3%
Beer/Wine (On-premises and Off-premises)	6	0.4%
Franchise Tax	3	0.2%
Miscellaneous	42	2.9%
Total	1,463	100.0%

Source: Town of Christiansburg, 2003.

### Taxable Sales

Taxable sales are generally indicative of a community's economic strength. Since the majority of Montgomery County's retail businesses are located within Christiansburg, the following percentages should correlate fairly well with the Town's taxable retail sale.

### 1996 and 2002 Taxable Sales

	1996	2002	Percent Change
Montgomery County	\$554,948,518	\$737,572,982	32.9%
Floyd County	\$31,987,054	\$40,217,568	25.7%
Giles County	\$80,134,089	\$106,702,666	33.2%
Pulaski County	\$195,318,363	\$228,050,637	16.8%
Radford City	\$60,812,240	\$72,536,701	19.3%
Virginia	\$53,923,259,963	\$70,645,312,671	31.0%

Source: Virginia Department of Taxation.

Montgomery County's taxable sales accounted for 62.2% of the New River Valley's total in 2002, further indicating the importance and success of the retail sector. The County's \$182,624,464 increase in taxable sales from 1996 to 2003 yielded a 32.9% change. Continued commercial growth within Christiansburg should further boost local taxable sales. Despite gains in sales within adjoining localities, Montgomery County, and therefore Christiansburg as the regional retail hub, should continue to dominate the dollar amount of taxable sales for the region.

## **Tourism**

Tourism is often sought by localities in part due to its desirable effect of bringing revenue into a locality. However, having desirable niches for attracting such tourism is an important component. Christiansburg does have such attractions including historic resources and a large retail base that attracts a large number of out-of-town visitors. The proximity to Virginia Tech and Radford University also adds to the tourism base of the Town due to graduations, sporting events, and parent weekends among other events that draw shoppers, provide guests for hotels and bed and breakfasts, and patrons for restaurants.

The downtown area has been of particular interest due to some closings and relocations and the Town is now in the process of a major downtown enhancement project.

## **Economic Development Agencies and Activities**

The Town Manager of Christiansburg serves as economic development contact for the Town of Christiansburg. The Town has marketed its Christiansburg Industrial Park, but has remained selective in its sale decisions.

The Montgomery County Economic Development office, housed at the Montgomery County Government Center, provides all of Montgomery County with a primary contact for economic development. Montgomery County markets the Falling Branch Corporate Park, which accommodates several new firms but still has available land.

The Christiansburg-Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce was incorporated in 1950 and in 2002, the Christiansburg-Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce merged with the Blacksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce to form the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce. The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce is located at the New River Valley Mall, 100 New River Road, Suite 216 and has approximately 370 members. The Chamber promotes economic development, helps develop a positive environment for the operation and growth of business and industry, and contributes to the development of a better quality of life for its citizens, including leisure time activities, community celebrations and improved civic involvement and opportunities.

The Christiansburg Downtown Development Partnership/Association is a conglomerate of citizens and businesses with an interest in improvement to the Downtown area. The

Downtown Enhancement project that is currently underway incorporates many of the ideas generated from the group.

The New River Valley Planning District Commission, located in Radford, is a regional planning, economic development, and technical assistance center. The NRVPC membership includes Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, and Pulaski Counties and the City of Radford as well as the Towns of Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Floyd, Narrows, Pearisburg, Pulaski, and Rich Creek as well as Radford University and Virginia Tech. The New River Valley Planning District is one of 21 Planning Districts in Virginia.

The New River Valley Planning District Commission is in the process of updating the Vision 2020 Regional Strategic Plan through *Community First*. The primary theme of the update is built on the ideas of harnessing change and building connections in the New River Valley. *Community First* is a basis for long-term investment and commitment to an overall mission for the region that is challenging, sustainable, and driven by the local citizens that forged it. An electronic version of this regional strategic plan can be found on the New River Valley Planning District Commission's website, "www.nrvpdc.org."

In 1998, Virginia's First Regional Industrial Facility Authority was formed to provide a regional approach to funding of industrial projects. The Authority is the first of its kind organized under the Regional Industrial Authorities Act, passed in 1997. Comprised of the Counties of Bland, Craig, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski, Roanoke, and Wythe and the Cities of Radford, Roanoke, and Salem as well as the Towns of Christiansburg, Dublin, Narrows, Pearisburg, and Pulaski, the Authority has broad powers to pursue development of industrial facilities and sharing of costs and revenues. Each jurisdiction member has two representatives on the Authority's 30-member Board of Directors and provides the opportunity for member jurisdiction to propose and participate in projects. For each project undertaken, a project Participation Committee is formed to define the project and the relationship among participants. At current, the Authority is in the process of developing the 1,000-acre Commerce Park at the New River Valley Airport near Dublin. The NRV Airport is home to the New River Valley Foreign Trade Zone #238 and Customs Port of Entry #1481.

The New River Valley Economic Development Alliance (NRVEDA), located in Dublin, serves the Counties of Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, and Pulaski as well as the City of Radford. The Alliance is composed of representatives from the various local governments, chambers of commerce, educational institutes, businesses and industries in order to address the long-term economic needs of the communities. This agency coordinates efforts on a regional level with local assistance and employer recruitment by the Montgomery Regional Economic Development Commission.

Virginia's Technology Corridor includes the Counties of Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski, and Roanoke as well as the Cities of Radford and Roanoke. These localities were selected as Virginia's Technology Corridor due in part to the New Century Council's efforts to stress the Roanoke and New River areas prominent universities, the

Blacksburg Electronic Village (the Internet's first community-based computer network), and local businesses that make or use technology-driven products and/or services. Virginia's Technology Corridor follows parts of Interstates 77, 81, and 581 and U.S. Route 220.

Virginia Tech Business Resources offer numerous opportunities to businesses. The resources include training and education, business assistance, a corporate research center, technology development and transfer, a human resources department, financing, and municipal assistance. Virginia Tech's Economic Development Assistance Center, housed within its Public Service Programs offers assistance to local and regional jurisdictions to manage economic change within the communities.

Radford University has a Business Assistance Center, which houses the New River Valley Small Business Development Center providing assistance in development of marketing ideas, creation/revision of business plans, and securing financing and has a SBDC Minority Business Program and a SBDC Environmental Management Program. The Business Assistance Center also houses an International Trade Center, a Training and Development Center, an Information and Technology Training Center, and a Governmental and Nonprofit Assistance Center.

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) manages a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, which allows localities to seek grants for a variety of community projects. The Town of Christiansburg has received a Downtown Redevelopment Grant under this program (which is discussed in Chapter 7 "Transportation" of this Plan).

The Town of Christiansburg received grants from W.K.K. Kellogg Foundation's Managing Information in Rural America (MIRA) for a trial newsletter as well as for assistance with the development of the Town Internet Homepage ([www.Christiansburg.org](http://www.Christiansburg.org)).

In 2000, Christiansburg was named one of America's 141 Dream Towns by Biz Journals. With an excellent quality of life and resources for growth the Town of Christiansburg is an attractive location to retail, services, and manufacturing alike.

### **Industrial Parks and Facilities**

The Town owns the Christiansburg Industrial Park, which has both water and sewer available and is located north off Roanoke Street (U.S. Routes 11 and 460) on Industrial Drive less than a half mile to I-81. The Christiansburg Industrial Park now houses Alvis Electric, American Electric Power, Ames Textiles, Comprehensive Computer Solutions, and Christiansburg Printing. Blue Ridge Timberwrights has purchased 5 acres and Lenzkes Tools has purchased 8.5 acres in the Christiansburg Industrial Park. There are now approximately 40 acres available in the Christiansburg Industrial Park.

Falling Branch Corporate Park, located on Falling Branch Road, is owned by the Industrial Development Authority of Montgomery County and currently has 105 usable acres available. Prestar Packaging relocated to the Falling Branch Corporate Park in 1999. EchoStar Communications opened a customer service center in the Falling Branch Corporate Park and is now the Town's largest employer with 1,400 employees. Ferguson Enterprises has recently purchased a shell building in the park for use as a plumbing, electrical, and HVAC supply distribution center.

The Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center (CRC) is an incubator-style industrial park with 330,000 square feet of office space and laboratory suites in eleven buildings. In Spring 1999, a three-story 50,000-square foot multi-tenant office and laboratory facility with an indoor cafe will be added as the twelfth building at the CRC. Also in 1999, a new 30,000 square foot facility for Virginia Tech's Center for Transportation Research opened at the CRC adjacent to the Smart Road. In 2001, the CRC joined an invitation-only international technology network known as "it-parcs" becoming the first technology park in the United States selected for membership. Also in the area are the Blacksburg Industrial Park and the Elliston-Lafayette Industrial Park.

The New River Valley Economic Development Alliance (NRVEDA) established the New River Valley Airport as a "User Fee" Airport for international port of entry for the New River Valley and western Virginia. The New River Valley Airport is home to the New River Valley Foreign Trade Zone #238 and Customs Port of Entry #1481. The Town of Christiansburg holds a one-seventh share of ownership of the New River Valley Airport Commission (along with the Towns of Dublin and Pulaski, Radford City, Giles County, Montgomery County, and Pulaski County). The New River Valley Airport, located on State Route 100 north of Dublin, is home to a general purpose Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) within a 50-acre tract.

The Town of Christiansburg is also part of the Virginia Tech - Montgomery Executive Airport Authority (along with the Town of Blacksburg, Montgomery County, and Virginia Tech). The Montgomery County - Virginia Tech Regional Airport, located in Blacksburg, primarily serves corporate and private clientele.

## **Agriculture and Forestry**

Though Christiansburg is an urban area, it still contains much farmland, with 28.9% of the Town still remaining an A Agricultural Zoning District as of December 2, 2003. The Town also has interdependence with Montgomery County and the New River Valley in terms of agriculture and forestry as a whole including the generation of revenues, provision of jobs, and sales and consumption within Town, as well as less obvious effects that the preservation of agricultural and forestall land bring. Virginia Tech includes a School of Agriculture and a School of Forestry, which are recognized as leaders in research and education.

According to the 1997 Census of Agriculture, Montgomery County had an average value of land and buildings per farm of \$325,119 per farm and \$1,764 per acre.

Estimated market value of all machinery and equipment was \$37,810 (average per farm). The following table illustrates farms, farmland, and average size of farms for Montgomery County, the New River Valley, state, and nation. Of Montgomery County's 517 farms, 34 were between 1 and 9 acres, 138 were 10-49 acres, 213 were 50-174 acres, 96 were 175-499 acres, 26 were 500-999 acres, and 12 were 1,000 acres or more.

### 1997 Farms, Land in Farms, and Average Size of Farms

	Montgomery County	New River Valley	Virginia	United States
Farms	517	1,959	41,095	1,911,859
Land in Farms (acres)	93,074	363,338	8,228,226	931,795,255
Average Size of Farm (acres)	180	185	200	487

\*Date based on a sample.

Source: U.S.D.A. National Agricultural Statistics Service, 1997 Census of Agriculture.

Christiansburg has a livestock auction market located on Park Street, NE at the intersection of Depot Street, NE which sees a good deal of activity. According to the 1997 Census of Agriculture, there were 25,506 cattle in Montgomery County with 2,641 being milk cows (2 years and older). There were also 3,602 stock sheep and lambs with data withheld for hogs and pigs to avoid disclosing information for individual farms.

### 1997 Farm Income and Sales – Montgomery County

<b>Crops Sold</b>	<b>\$2,032,000</b>
Grains	\$284,000
Tobacco	--
Field seeds, hay, forage, and silage	\$203,000
Other field crops	(D)
Vegetables, sweet corn, and melons	\$48,000
Fruits, nuts, and berries	(D)
Nursery and greenhouse products	\$1,345,000
Forest products sold	\$170,000
<b>Livestock, Poultry and Products Sold</b>	<b>\$11,522,000</b>
Poultry and Products	(D)
Dairy products	\$5,592,000
Cattle and calves	\$5,003,000
Hogs and pigs	(D)
Sheep, lambs, and wool	\$293,000
Other livestock and products	\$601,000
<b>Total income from farms</b>	<b>\$13,555,000</b>
<b>Custom work and other services</b>	<b>\$74,000</b>

(D) Data withheld to avoid disclosing information for individual farms

-- Represents zero.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1997 Census of Agriculture.

As can be see by the preceding table, 1997 Farm Income and Sales, there was a total income from sales of \$13,555,000. Nursery and greenhouse products accounted for \$1,345,000 of the total \$2,032,000 in crops sold. Dairy products accounted for \$5,592,000 and cattle and calves accounted for \$5,003,000 of the total \$11,522,000 in livestock, poultry, and products sold. This shows the continued importance of the dairy and cattle industry to the area.

Based on forest product tax receipts, Montgomery County had a harvest total of 1,814,000 board feet of pine lumber and 537 pine cords as well as 4,860,000 board feet of hardwood lumber and 5,386 hardwood cords in 1998-99 according to the Virginia Department of Forestry. Montgomery County had a pine stumpage value of \$137,527 and a hardwood stumpage value of \$792,395 for a total value of \$929,922.

According to the U.S. Forest Service, approximately 57% of the area in Montgomery County was forest in 1992, with 85% of the forest land being private and 15% of the forest land being public. There were approximately 91,306,970 trees in Montgomery County in 1992 with the top 10 species being as follows: chestnut oak, eastern white pine, red maple, Virginia pine, flowering dogwood, redbud, northern red oak, white oak, sugar maple, and sourwood. The top 10 species are derived from how abundant it is (number of trees) and how dominant it is (how big).

## **Mineral Resources**

Montgomery County has a rich history of coal mining, particularly in the Merrimac area, just north of Christiansburg. Coal, clay, and sulfur are among items extracted in the areas surrounding Christiansburg. These mines are now dormant however, and there is little in the way of mining in the areas inside or immediately adjoining the Town. Acco Stone Company (located north of Christiansburg in Montgomery County) and Sisson and Ryan Quarries (in Shawsville) are large producers of sand, aggregate, and base stone.