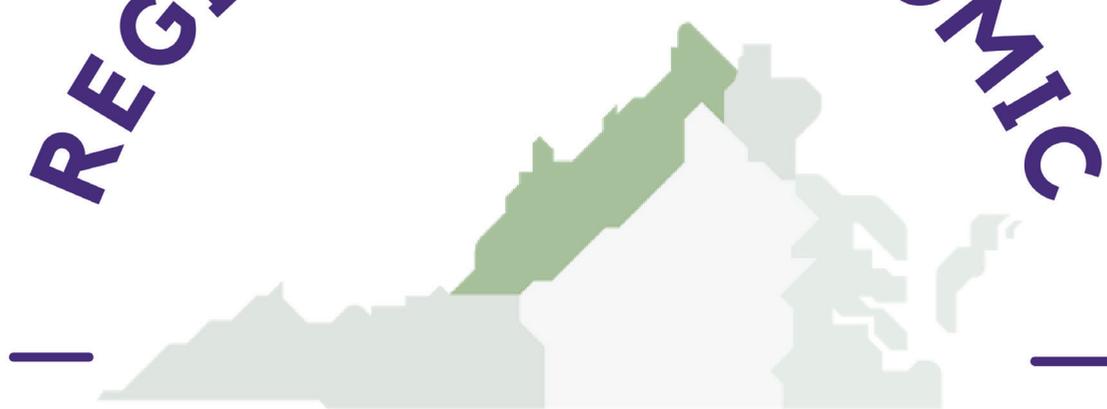


REGIONAL ECONOMIC



**JAMES MADISON
UNIVERSITY®**

RECOVERY SERIES

PRESENTED BY: JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

August 23, 2022
Atlantic Union Bank Center - Harrisonburg, VA

Sponsored By:



University Economic Development Council

Jonathan R. Alger, Ph.D., *President, James Madison University*

Melissa M. Lubin, Ph.D., *Chief Economic Engagement Officer; School of Professional & Continuing Education*

Nicholas Swartz, Ph.D., *Regional Economic Recovery Series Chair; School of Professional & Continuing Education*

Suzanne Bergmeister, *Gilliam Center for Entrepreneurship*

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Keith Holland, Ph.D., *Research and Scholarship*

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Jay Langston, Ph.D., *Shenandoah Valley Partnership*

Val Larsen, Ph.D., *Speaker, Faculty Senate*

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Caitlyn Read, *Government Relations*

David Stringer, *College of Visual and Performing Arts*

Katie Weaver, *Office of Procurement Services*

Welcome

On behalf of JMU's University Economic Development Council, I welcome you to the 2nd annual Regional Economic Recovery Series event held in the beautiful Atlantic Union Bank Center.

Today's event is a platform to hear best practices from experts in the field and an opportunity for our region to further identify ways to work together to solve issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

Today's event would not have been possible without the dedication and talent of several individuals. I would like to personally thank: JMU President Jonathan Alger for his dedication and commitment to JMU's role as an anchor institution; our working group chairs (Ben Craig, Dany Fleming, Vici Garber, Dr. Sharon Johnson, and Chris Quinn) for their commitment and promotion of the Regional Economic Recovery Series and the Shenandoah Valley Collective Action Pact; Dr. Melissa Lubin for her continued partnership and visionary leadership; and Melanie Carver, Kristina Oates, and Stephen Robinson for their planning support to ensure today's event is a success.

It is my hope that through the power of collective action we will help our region reach its economic potential.



Regional Economic Recovery Series Chair



Dr. Nicholas (Nick) Swartz is the Associate Dean of the School of Professional & Continuing Education at JMU where he oversees a number of university-wide economic and community development related initiatives and projects. While at JMU, Nick has enjoyed serving in various leadership positions including Director of the nationally accredited Master of Public Administration Program, Founder and Director of the Madison Center for Community Development, Associate Vice Provost for Research and Scholarship, and his current role as Associate Dean of the School of Professional & Continuing Education.

Prior to joining JMU in 2008, he worked in private sector commercial development and local government for a number of years which served as the foundation for his passion for engagement work. Nick earned a Ph.D. in Public Policy with a concentration in urban and regional economic development from UNC Charlotte as well as a Master of Public Administration and a bachelor's in Political Science from UNC Wilmington.

Meeting Agenda

August 23, 2022

Working Together to Solve Regional Issues

- 10:00 - 10:05 am** **Welcome**
- Nicholas Swartz, Ph.D., Regional Economic Recovery Series Chair & Associate Dean**
JMU School of Professional & Continuing Education
- 10:05 - 10:30 am** **Anchor Institutions and Economic Engagement Panel**, Facilitated by Melissa M. Lubin, Ph.D., *Chief Economic Engagement Officer*
- Panel Members:**
Jonathan Alger - President, James Madison University
Cory Davies - Executive Director, RMH Foundation
- 10:30 - 11:10 am** **Transportation Panel**, Facilitated by Ben Craig, *Executive Director of Way To Go, Inc* and Vici Garber, *Regional Specialist with Shenandoah Initiative for Adult Education*
- Panel Members:**
Amy Conrick - Director, National Center for Mobility Management
Jenna French - Director of Tourism and Economic Development, Shenandoah County
Matthias Smith - General Manager, Massanutten Resort
- 11:10 - 11:50 am** **Regional Workforce Initiatives**, Facilitated by Vici Garber, *Regional Specialist with Shenandoah Initiative for Adult Education* and Sharon Johnson, Ph.D., *Chief Executive Officer, Shenandoah Valley Workforce Development Board*
- Panel Members:**
Vici Garber – Regional Specialist, Shenandoah Initiative for Adult Education
Kathleen Gass – Regional Manufacturing Liaison, Blue Ridge Community College
Debby Hopkins - Project Manager, Appteon, Inc.
Debbie Melvin – Assistant Vice President, Talent Solutions of Virginia Economic Development Partnership
Sharon Johnson, Ph.D. – Chief Executive Officer, Shenandoah Valley Workforce Development Board

Meeting Agenda

Working Together to Solve Regional Issues

- 11:50 - 12:20 pm** **Plated Lunch**
- 12:20 - 1:00 pm** **Housing Panel**, Facilitated by Dany Fleming, *Chair of Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority*
Panel Members:
Olivia Raines - Housing Program Manager, Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission
Liz Webb - Housing Coordinator, City of Harrisonburg
Ryan Price - Chief Economist, Virginia Realtors Association
- 1:00 - 1:40 pm** **Childcare Panel**, Facilitated by Chris Quinn, *President and CEO of Harrisonburg-Rockingham Chamber of Commerce*
Panel Members:
Aaron Merchen - Director Early Childhood Education Program, US Chamber Foundation
Jennifer Testa - Organizational Development Consultant and Facilitator
- 1:40 - 2:00 pm** **Next Steps**, Facilitated by Nicholas Swartz, Ph.D., *RERS Chair and Associate Dean of JMU School of Professional and Continuing Education* and Jay Langston, Ph.D., *Executive Director, Shenandoah Valley Partnership*

Shenandoah Valley Collective Action Pact



The purpose of the Shenandoah Valley Collective Action Pact is to galvanize the economic potential of the region through commitment, collaboration, solutions, and promotion. There is and has always been a spirit of collaboration and partnership in the Valley.

In order to help our region reach its economic potential, we agree to:

- ✓ **COMMIT** to working across sectors and collaboratively on priority areas of action;
- ✓ **COLLABORATE** to develop **SOLUTIONS** and advocate within and across sectors to achieve the aims set out in this Pact; and
- ✓ **PROMOTE** the work of the Shenandoah Valley Collective Action Pact.

This Pact will elevate the Shenandoah Valley as a model of economic success and help support our regional economy.

The work of the Shenandoah Valley Collective Action Pact will be facilitated by James Madison University, in collaboration with many other community partners.

Anchor Institutions and Economic Engagement



Jonathan Alger is president of James Madison University. He has previously served as senior vice president and general counsel at Rutgers University, assistant general counsel at the University of Michigan, and in legal and policy positions at the American Association of University Professors and the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. At Michigan, he helped lead the university's efforts in two landmark Supreme Court cases on diversity and admissions.

Alger is a nationally recognized scholar and speaker on higher education policy and law. He is past board chair of the National Association of College and University Attorneys, which honored him with Life Membership and the Distinguished Service Award. He has served on many national boards and committees, including the American Association of Colleges & Universities, American Council on Education, Campus Compact, and the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics. Alger is a graduate of Swarthmore College and Harvard Law School.

Cory Davies is the Executive Director for the RMH Foundation and serves a lead role in external partnerships at Sentara RMH Medical Center where he has worked for 14 years. A member of the Harrisonburg Rotary Club, Cory also enjoys serving on the Board of Directors for Explore More Discovery Museum. When he's not working, he enjoys running long distances, snowboarding, and attempting to surf ... all with his five kids.

Cory's prior experience includes work as an adjunct faculty member in James Madison University's School of Communication; as the Outreach Coordinator at the Collins Center in Harrisonburg, VA; and as an associate with M+R Strategic Services, a public affairs firm based in Washington, DC. Cory is the recipient of the Association for Healthcare Philanthropy's Top 40 under 40 award and the Shenandoah Valley Business Journal's Top 10 under 40. He holds a non-profit management certificate from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, a M.A. degree in public communication from the American University in Washington DC, and graduated summa cum laude with a B.A. in speech communication from the University of Utah.



Melissa Lubin, Ph.D. is the Chief Economic Engagement Officer and Dean, School of Professional & Continuing Education at James Madison University. In this role, she oversees a continuum of learning through every stage and phase of life, work and play and serves as the university champion for community engagement and economic development, linking the needs of business, government, community and education through expanding collaboration and public-private partnerships. Previously, Melissa was at Virginia Tech, where she was the director of the university's Commonwealth Campus Centers in Richmond, Newport News, and Virginia Beach, where they created, customized, and facilitated a series of human development programming for organizations in the private and public sector.

Melissa earned a Ph.D. from Virginia Tech in Adult Learning and Human Resource Development, an MBA in Management from Parker College of Georgia Southern University and Bachelor of General Studies from Armstrong State College. She is a credentialed executive coach through the International Coach Federation, a master practitioner of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and certified in the EQi emotional intelligence assessment.

Transportation



Amy Conrick is a Deputy Director at the Community Transportation Association of America, where she has worked since 2006. Over the last 17 years she has worked as a presenter, trainer, facilitator, and program manager in the fields of employment transportation, health care transportation, mobility management, and transportation innovation. She also serves as the Director of the National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM), a post she has held since 2018. NCMM is a technical assistance center funded by the Federal Transit Administration, with a mission to support cross-sector collaborations and mobility management professionals as they work to solve transportation issues.

Ben Craig currently serves as Executive Director for Way to Go, an economic empowerment organization providing transportation assistance to low-income workers in Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. In September 2022, he looks forward to joining Sentara Rockingham Memorial Hospital (RMH) Foundation as the Director of Annual Giving. He possesses over 14 years of professional experience across the nonprofit, local government, and state government sectors in project development and management, public relations and marketing, and fund development and financial oversight. Born in Raleigh, NC, he graduated with a Bachelor's degree in applied economics from Virginia Tech and holds a Master's degree in community and economic development from Penn State University.



In the community, Ben is a certified Master Gardener through Virginia Cooperative Extension, serves as Secretary for the Rocktown Rotary Club, is an Elder at Massanutten Presbyterian Church, serves on the City of Harrisonburg's Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee, and is an Executive Committee Board Member for the Shenandoah Valley Workforce Development Board. When not working or serving the community, he and his husband enjoy traveling, summers by their pool, and spoiling their miniature Schnauzer – Jasmine.



Jenna French currently serves as the Director of Tourism & Economic Development for Shenandoah County. She started her career in tourism when she joined Shenandoah County in 2013 overseeing just tourism before the County restructured and moved economic development under Jenna's leadership by consolidating economic development and tourism into one department. In addition to her day job, Jenna serves on the Board of the Virginia Economic Development Association (VEDA) where she chairs the Rural Shared Interest Group (SIG) and participates on the Communications Committee. Jenna also serves on the Woodstock Enhancement Committee (WE) where she chairs the town's Events Committee, is President of the Shenandoah Memorial Hospital Foundation and serves on the Shenandoah County Library Foundation Board. In what little free time she has, Jenna enjoys being outdoors with her two children, dogs and chickens and riding her motorcycle.



Vici Garber is the Regional Specialist and PluggedInVA Coordinator for Shenandoah Initiative for Adult Education (SHINE). She started her career in adult education in 2001 with a focus on employment services. She has previously worked as an independent GED® tutor, an employment specialist, and an ESOL instructor. Through SHINE, she has served as an instructor for GED® classes, Job Readiness, and PluggedInVA. She has created successful programs that run at Middle River Regional Jail and Shenandoah Valley Social Services. Vici was the 2018 recipient of the Virginia Association for Adult & Continuing Education Teacher of the Year award.

Vici currently serves as the Chair of the Central Shenandoah Valley Reentry Council and as Vice-chair of the Harrisonburg Rockingham Page Reentry Council. She is co-chair of the Regional Economic Recovery Series Transportation and Workforce Subcommittees. Vici is the newly elected president of the Way to Go Board of Directors. She is a member of the Community Advisory Committee for Harrisonburg Community Corrections Alternative Placement, as well as, a state DOC/DSS workgroup for reentry councils. She serves on the region's Business Solutions Team and represents Adult Education on the Virginia Community College System Virginia Higher Education for Incarcerated Students Consortium.

Matthias Smith is General Manager of the Massanutten Resort and Vice President of Resort Performance for the Resorts Companies. Prior to beginning his position at the resort, Matthias served as General Manager of Keswick Hall in Charlottesville, VA and the Inn at Perry Cabin in St. Michaels, MD. Earlier in his career, Matthias held several key management positions with the Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts in Maui, HI and Boston, MA. Born in England, he graduated from the University of California at Berkeley, and was a Teach For America Corps Member on the Mexican border in Texas.

When not working to develop his team of Directors and staff to ensure that all owners and guests enjoy the best possible experience, he spends time with his three children, runs with his wife and explores hiking spots in the foothills of Virginia. In the community, he serves as immediate Past Chair for the Blue Ridge Community College Educational Foundation and is an Executive Committee Board Member for the Harrisonburg Rockingham Chamber of Commerce.



Regional Workforce Initiatives



Vici Garber is the Regional Specialist and PluggedInVA Coordinator for Shenandoah Initiative for Adult Education (SHINE). She started her career in adult education in 2001 with a focus on employment services. She has previously worked as an independent GED® tutor, an employment specialist, and an ESOL instructor. Through SHINE, she has served as an instructor for GED® classes, Job Readiness, and PluggedInVA. She has created successful programs that run at Middle River Regional Jail and Shenandoah Valley Social Services. Vici was the 2018 recipient of the Virginia Association for Adult & Continuing Education Teacher of the Year award.

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Kathleen Gass began as the newly created Regional Manufacturing Liaison role in January 2020. She is working to ensure that Blue Ridge Community College (BRCC) and James Madison University are providing curriculum and graduates that meet Merck, Elkton's ever-growing workforce needs. Now that the framework has been set to fulfill Merck's needs, Kathleen is expanding to helping other manufacturing companies in the Valley via Job Starter Training and curriculum updates.

Prior to joining BRCC, Kathleen worked at Gilead Sciences in Foster City, CA for 6 years and Merck and Company at the West Point, PA, Cramlington, UK and Elkton, VA sites for 12 years. The majority of her experience was working on scaling up new products from research-scale to large-scale manufacturing equipment across North American and European sites and then ongoing process troubleshooting. Kathleen earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemical Engineering from Pennsylvania State University. Kathleen serves on the board of directors for the Shenandoah Valley Partnership (SVP), Shenandoah Valley Technology Council (SVTC) and Rockingham Educational Foundation, Inc. (REFI).



Debby Hopkins is Project Manager with Appteon, Inc., an IT business providing federal agencies with technology and workforce development solutions. Debby directs a national project to expand registered apprenticeship in critical IT/Cyber occupations. As Chief Workforce Officer & Program Director for the Shenandoah Valley Workforce Development Board, Debby managed federal grants including the American Apprenticeship Initiative recognized by the US Department of Labor for promising workforce practices. Debby's career includes HR Executive roles in technology companies and grant management at Blue Ridge Community College. Debby serves on the Advisory Council of a new nonprofit advocacy organization, Apprenticeships for America. She was a member of the Lead Virginia Class of 2020, and holds an M.B.A. from Lehigh University along with industry certifications in project management, workforce development, and human resource management.



As Assistant Vice President of the Regional Talent Solutions and Business Outreach division, **Debbie Melvin** helps lead Virginia Economic Development Partnership's (VEDP) efforts to define and establish workforce initiatives and partnerships that strengthen Virginia's talent pipeline and VEDP's workforce development offerings. She also works directly with newly-locating and expanding Virginia businesses, helping address their growth needs and challenges. This includes assisting with their recruitment and training activities and supporting their efforts with funding from the Virginia Jobs Investment Program or services from the Virginia Talent Accelerator Program.

Debbie has been involved in numerous workforce initiatives including participating on Virginia's state-level Business Services team, the advisory group for the rebranding of Virginia's workforce system to "Virginia Career Works," the advisory group for the branding of the Virginia Workforce Credential Grant to "Fast Forward," the Virginia Manufacturers Association's Workforce Solutions committee, the National Governor's Association's Center for Best Practices' state collaborative consortium to understand and support the on-demand workforce, and a national cohort sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment & Training Administration to capture best practices for integrated business services teams. She also served as the Secretary of Commerce and Trade's designee on the Virginia Board for Workforce Development. Debbie is a past president and former board member of the Virginia Economic Developers Association and was honored to receive the VEDA Cardinal Award in 2019.

Sharon Johnson, Ph.D. is passionate about developing partnerships, designing solutions, and leveraging resources to successfully implement regional workforce solutions. Sharon has authored grant proposals awarding over \$26M for regional partner-driven workforce initiatives. Dr. Johnson is a workforce executive with experience in workforce development board leadership, human capital development including workforce initiative design, implementation, and evaluation and workforce research.

She serves on numerous local, regional, and state advisory councils. Sharon is past Chair for the Virginia Association of Workforce Directors. She presents at regional, state, and national conferences. Dr. Johnson testified before the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development on "On-the-Job Training: Rebuilding the Workforce through Apprenticeships" highlighting the regions innovative work to advance apprenticeships. She most recently was invited to participate on a panel discussion with Deputy Secretary of Labor Julie Su and Deputy Assistant Secretary Lenita Jacobs-Simmons at the National Association of Workforce Boards. This spring Dr. Johnson, her team, and regional workforce partners hosted a Congressional delegation at the Virginia Career Works Workforce Center in Harrisonburg. Dr. Johnson is currently serving on the Workforce Transformation Policy Council, a handpicked group of future focused workforce professionals who have an opportunity to inform federal policy and develop recommendations to better support a robust 21st century national workforce development system.

Sharon received her Ph.D. in Human Capital Development from the University of Southern Mississippi and her MS in Adult Education and Human Resource Development from James Madison University.



Housing



Dany Fleming is currently the Chair of the Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority, which provides funding and housing for low-income families and residents and fosters redevelopment projects to ensure economic, social, and housing vitality in Harrisonburg. Dany has also served on and Chaired the Harrisonburg School Board and Harrisonburg Board of Zoning Appeals. Dany has worked for 35+ years, first in Chicago and now in Harrisonburg, supporting innovative education and community and economic development work. Among his previous work is with the Center for Neighborhood Technology, which was a national pioneer in both urban sustainability and innovative, affordable housing development, and The Civic Committee of Chicago, which authored Metropolis 2020, the plan for the Chicago region, including education, housing, transportation, and land use.

For more than a decade, **Ryan Price** has honed his knowledge of Virginia's housing market. Before stepping into his current role of Virginia REALTORS® Chief Economist, Ryan served as the association's Deputy Chief Economist. Prior to joining, he served as the President of research consulting firm LSA Planning, as an Urban Planner for the City of Alexandria, and as part of the research team at the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University. Before joining Virginia Association of REALTORS® full time, Ryan spent years contributing to the Association's research, including the monthly Virginia Home Sales Report and quarterly regional market reports. He holds a bachelor's degree in finance from James Madison University and a master's degree in urban planning from Virginia Tech.



Olivia Raines joined the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) in June 2021 and stepped into the newly created role of Housing Program Manager in November. Olivia is managing the recent \$2 million housing grant received from Virginia Housing, affording the CSPDC the opportunity to further facilitate regional housing initiatives, including the recently funded Regional Housing Study. Prior to joining the CSPDC, Olivia lived in Charlottesville where she worked for an affordable housing non-profit as a program coordinator, working with residents experiencing housing instability. This role cultivated a passion for housing advocacy which has carried her into her new role working on housing on a regional level. Olivia is an alum of the University of Virginia, and earned her Masters in City and Regional Planning with a concentration in Housing from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Liz Web is the Housing Coordinator for the City of Harrisonburg. Originating this role, Liz is tasked with helping the city to achieve its vision of Available Housing For All. Guided by the 2021 Comprehensive Housing Assessment and Market Study, Liz has been researching funding opportunities and policies that will position Harrisonburg as a robust market for high quality affordable development and rehabilitation, and a partner in bringing programs to support homebuyers and renters to meet their housing needs. After starting her housing career in training and consulting, she has worked at state and local housing agencies in California and South Carolina. Most recently, Liz managed the Housing Choice Voucher program at the Harrisonburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority, where she administered over \$5 million in annual subsidy rental payments. She holds a Bachelor's degree from Smith College.



Childcare



Aaron Merchen is director of policy and programs at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Center for Education and Workforce. Merchen works on the Chamber Foundation's early childhood education portfolio leading efforts to educate policy makers, state and local chambers and early education advocates on business' role in early education to promote investments in the workforce of today and tomorrow.

Before joining the Chamber Foundation, Merchen worked at the National Association for the Education of Young Children as assistant director of federal policy. There he led the association's engagement with Congress and efforts to elevate the voices and needs of the early childhood workforce. Earlier in his career, Merchen was a senior policy associate at RESULTS Educational Fund where he collaborated with a diverse group of organizations to promote an integrated, comprehensive global agenda for children within the U.S. government and researched innovative funding mechanisms for early interventions in low-income nations. Merchen holds degrees from South Dakota State University and the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education. He lives in Washington, DC with his wife and son.

Jennifer Testa's personal mission statement is to positively affect the lives of those around her. She accomplishes this mission by offering workshops focused on strategic planning, leadership development, conflict resolution, team building, personality/behavioral assessments, customer service, communication, and more.

With Bachelor's Degrees in both Human Resources and Psychology from Auburn University and a Master's Degree in Adult Education from James Madison University, Jennifer is able to combine her educational experience with over 20 years of work experience to help others grow both personally and in their relationships with each other.



Chris Quinn is currently the President & CEO of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Chamber of Commerce. Prior to arriving in the Valley, he held several leadership roles for various organizations in Florida such as Vice President of International Affairs for Wexford Strategies, a public affairs and business develop firm, where he led the company's activities in global business growth and advocacy strategies. He also spent several years as Vice President of Industry and Government Affairs for JAX Chamber where he was their head lobbyist.

In addition to the above roles, Chris also worked in Washington, DC for groups such as the Association for Advanced Life Underwriting, where he was responsible for their industry coalition, the Issues Alliance, and then led the DMA Nonprofit Federation as Executive Director, a trade association representing nonprofits and the fundraising community. Earlier in his career he spent time working in the Massachusetts State Senate and has been involved in various local and statewide political campaigns in Massachusetts, Virginia, and Florida.

Chris has an undergraduate degree in Political Science from the University of South Carolina and a master's degree in Political Science from Suffolk University in Boston.



We thank our sponsors for their commitment and support in helping our region reach its economic potential.





The Atlantic Union Bank Center opened in November, 2020 as the sparkling new home of the James Madison University men's and women's basketball programs, while also opening the door to a multitude of other events to benefit the campus and the local community. It stands as the preeminent facility of its type in the Shenandoah Valley.

The completed building includes two primary sections with an 8,500-seat event venue as well as a comprehensive basketball program area, designed to maximize student-athlete success across all aspects of the collegiate experience.

