

Covid-19 Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan



2021 Edition



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This project, funded by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES ACT), was made possible by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and a Joint Funding Agreement with the Department for Local Government (DLG). The purpose is to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus pandemic and assist with the resulting economic injury that occurred due to the virus.

Background



The COVID-19 pandemic was addressed in the 2020 update of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) where it was listed as a threat to the region. This Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan is supplemental to that update. The CEDS mentioned some of the impacts COVID had on many aspects of life in the region, but this plan will go into more detail. This plan also addresses short-term and long-term approaches to rebuild resilient and sustainable communities throughout the Kentucky River Area Development District (KRADD) region.

Executive Summary



Bell Located in Beattyville, Kentucky at the Lee County Fiscal Court.

Photograph from Lee County Kentucky Government Facebook Page with the caption “Each day we ring the bell in remembrance of those who have lost their lives to Covid 19, as well as those who are battling the disease. Tonight we light the bell green in the same honor. #TeamLeeCounty #TeamKentucky #HealthyatHome”

The COVID-19 pandemic upended all aspects of life. This virus had a global impact, leaving no industry untouched. Effects were felt across the eight county Kentucky River region. Leslie, Lee, Letcher, Knott, Perry, Owsley, Breathitt and Wolfe county all faced obstacles as the virus spread for over a year. The initial shutdown turned into months, which then turned into a new normal way of pandemic living.

This Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan was created by the Kentucky River Area Development District through an Economic Development Administration (EDA) and Joint Funding Agreement partnership planning grant through the Department of Local Government (DLG) funded with money from the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. It is intended to act as a guide for the KRADD region to consult as it recovers from pandemic impacts and looks forward to a stronger future that can withstand other economic shocks. The guiding tenants are to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus pandemic.

According to EDA, Economic resilience encompasses “the ability to recover quickly from a shock, the ability to withstand a shock, and the ability to avoid the shock altogether.” The KRADD region withstood the shock of the global coronavirus pandemic to varying degrees, depending on location and industry. It is the hope of this plan to address the recovery and resiliency efforts that can help the region withstand and avoid future shocks.

Executive Summary

In this plan, ten categories are analyzed: Economy, consumer spending, business and industry, education, healthcare, tourism, community events, government, community services, and infrastructure. Data analysis for these categories is included in each section; as well as, best practices that emerged from the pandemic experience. From the analysis, recovery and resiliency strategies were drawn. Recovery strategies encompass the short-term changes and actions to help with immediate recovery. The Key to this plan was the CARES Act. Resiliency strategies discuss the long-term changes and actions that should be considered to lessen the impact of future pandemics or other disasters. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) focuses more on long-term resiliency efforts.

After analyzing the impacts across sectors, the actions taken to respond to those impacts, and weaknesses in those responses, several themes emerged. The common resiliency goals that came out of research for this project are as follows:



Broadband



Disaster Preparedness



Creativity



Trust & Communication

Executive Summary



The pandemic revealed broadband to be critical infrastructure. People relied on internet access to remain connected to the world and information during the pandemic. Many aspects of life shifted toward completely online such as; businesses, healthcare, communication, education and more.

Those with access to reliable internet were more resilient during this time than those without it. Those without high speed internet struggled with education, healthcare and communication. To better prepare for future obstacles, reliable in-home broadband access is essential for all citizens.



Disaster preparedness is essential in responding to a disaster, but especially so the COVID-19 pandemic. Everyone benefits from being prepared; governments, educational institutions, businesses, healthcare and other organizations. For example, near the start of the pandemic, few were prepared for the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) demand. To prepare for a surge in COVID-19 cases or another pandemic, essential industries and those who are public-facing, such as healthcare, law enforcement and government agencies should have a stockpile of PPE. It is ideal that this stockpile should be enough to cover these industries and agencies and those who they interact with on a regular basis. It is ideal that there is enough stockpile to not only cover these industries but also provide PPE to those who interact with these industries regularly.

Executive Summary



The world changed overnight with the rise of the Coronavirus pandemic. Adaptability was essential to being able to absorb the shock of rapid change. The way we lived completely changed. Businesses shifted toward online sales with buy online/pick up in store options. Employers who were able to switch to a work from home environment were encouraged to do so by Governor Andy Brashear. As a result of the pandemic, telehealth also became a primary form of medical treatment. Households became more creative in how they spend their time during shutdowns. COVID-19 brought a need for families, communities and businesses to quickly adapt to a new way of life. Those who were able to quickly adapt to the new normal, were the ones who stayed afloat during these difficult times.



Trust and communication is vital to resiliency. During times of massive distress, citizens need to communicate with trustworthy entities. There needs to be clear and effective dissemination of information to the public. Those working across map lines need to work together and communicate with one another regularly in order to provide accurate information to the public. With strong trust and communication, instances such as the panic buying and hoarding of products like toilet paper, cleaning products and bread would be less likely to occur. In times of uncertainty, the public needs community leaders that are both trustworthy and communicates to them in an effective, informational tone. This would help calm the public and prevent panic buying from occurring.

History



Pandemics happen when new viruses emerge and are easily transmittable from person to person. Widespread viruses and diseases begin as epidemics. They are contained to large populations within a community or region. An epidemic becomes a pandemic once the disease or virus has spread to other countries.

The health crisis grew rapidly after the first confirmed American case of COVID-19 in January 2020. With the eruption of economic impact and a rapidly changing environment, it is clear that pandemics should be considered alongside other hazards a community may face. COVID-19 has become the third leading cause of death in the U.S., behind heart disease and cancer. Every facet of life was changed by this pandemic and our struggle will be remembered in future events.



COVID-19 HEALTH TIPS

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20+ seconds
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth
- Stay home from work or school if you are sick or showing symptoms
- Use tissues and cover your mouth when coughing
- Throw away tissues after coughing, sneezing or blowing nose
- Clean and disinfect surfaces regularly used and touched

Please visit kyCovid19.ky.gov for the latest updates on COVID-19 in Kentucky or call the Kentucky state hotline at 1-800-722-5725

Kentucky Public Health | TEAM KENTUCKY | CNFS

Hazard, City Hall

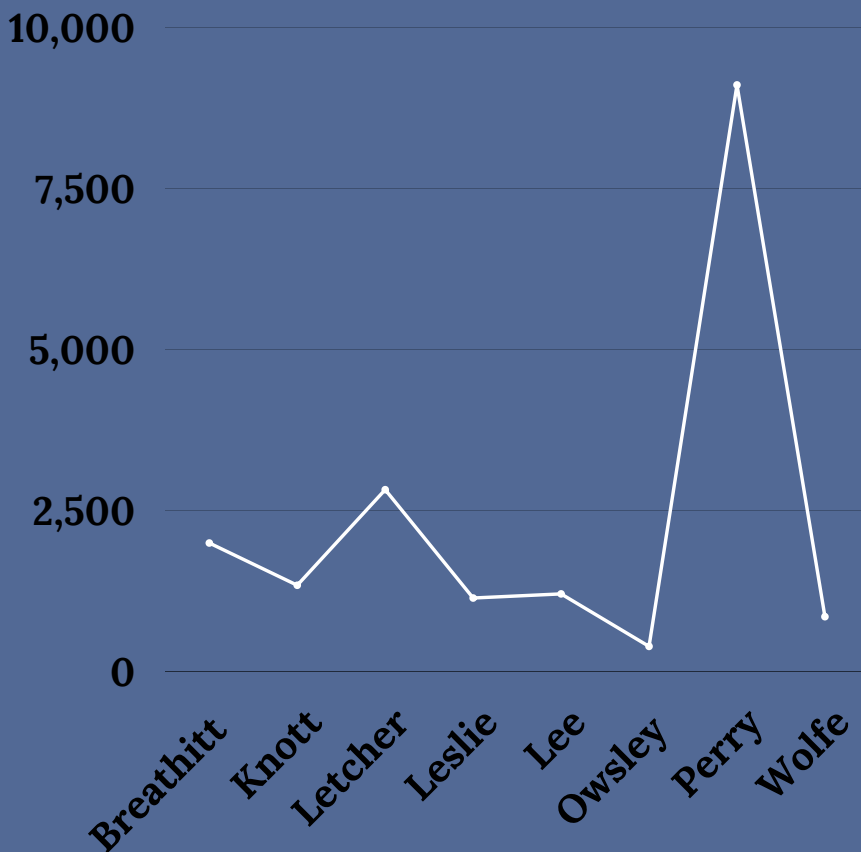
Governor Andy Brashear declared a State of Emergency for Kentucky on March 6, 2020 (Executive order 2020-215). Later on March 9, 2020, Governor Beshear met with all 120 county Judge Executives to provide updates and discuss emergency management. On March 6, 2020 Governor Andy Brashear began giving daily updates regarding COVID-19 to keep the public informed on the virus with news such as infection rates, safety guidelines and more. The final public update was given on June 11, 2021, over a year later.

The CARES Act put in place an eviction moratorium beginning March 27, 2020 and extended through July 24, 2020. Landlords were not permitted to file notices of eviction until August 23, 2020. This was followed by an eviction moratorium from the CDC that took effect September 4th, 2020. It was set to end December 31, 2020; however, this was extended to the end of January, then extended again to the end of March, and again to the end of June 2021.

Economy



The economic impacts from the pandemic were felt across the country. Unemployment rose as businesses closed or shutdown. The entire KRADD region suffered as well. The chart below represents the total employment statistic in 2020 for KRADD counties.



Breathitt: 1,995
Leslie: 1,141
Letcher: 2,823
Knott: 1,339
Lee: 1,205
Owsley: 390
Perry: 9,107
Wolfe: 851
Total Employment for KY 2020: 1,666,421
KRADD Total: 18,851

In May 2020, research company Chmura released data detailing the economic vulnerability across Kentucky. This is a measurement of how the COVID-19 pandemic could negatively impact a county's employment due to the counties mix of industries. 100 is the national average which is used as the baseline.

For the KRADD region, seven of the eight counties were expected to do better than the national average, with only Lee County predicted to be slightly more impacted at 109. Knott was one of the least vulnerable across the region, with just an index of 63.

Source: www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/chart/wolfecountykentucky,perrycountykentucky,owsleycountykentucky,breathittcountykentucky,KY/BZA110220#BZA110220y

Economy

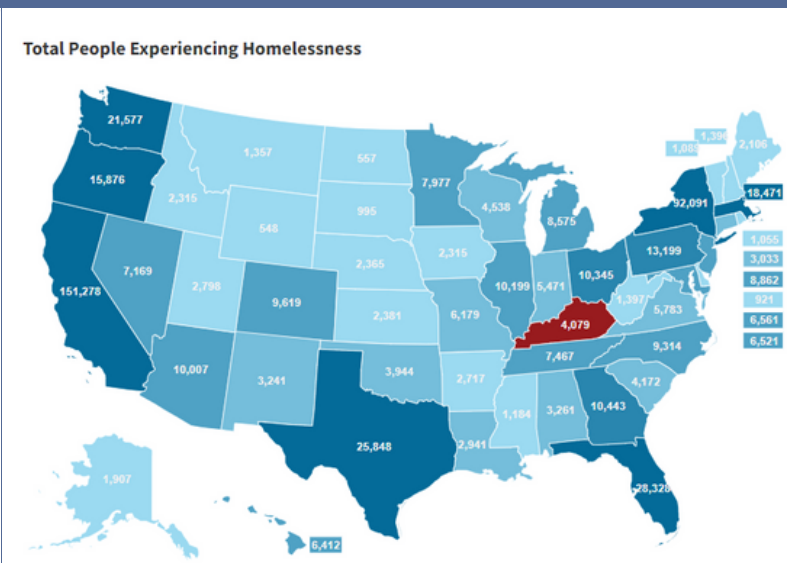
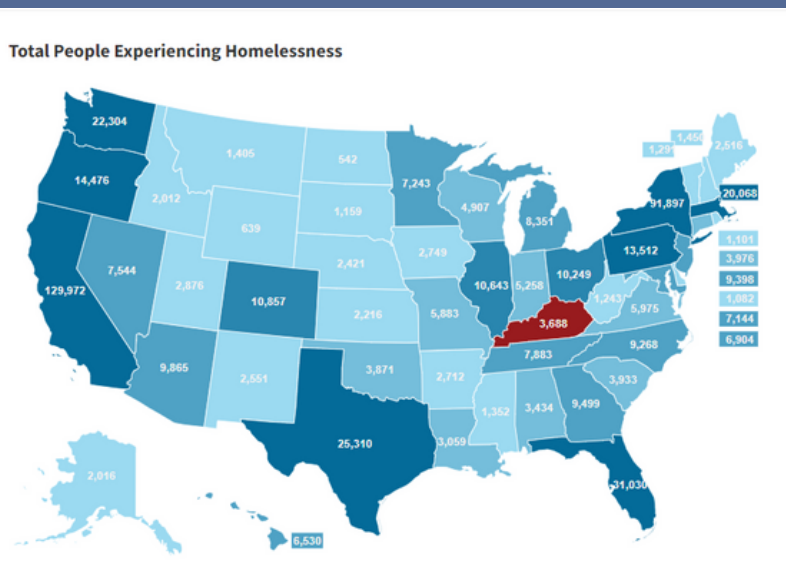
Homelessness

Early in the pandemic, preventing evictions was made a priority at both the federal and state levels. Eviction moratoriums were continuously extended to prevent a vast amount of people from instantly becoming homeless due to the economic shutdown related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Homeless in Kentucky Statistics 2019, Homeless Estimation by State | US Interagency Council on Homelessness (usich.gov), “As of January 2020, Kentucky had an estimated 4,011 experiencing homelessness on any given day, as reported by Continuums of Care to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Of that Total, 277 were family households, 399 were Veterans, 221 were unaccompanied young adults (aged 18-24), and 666 were individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. Public school data reported to the U.S. Department of Education during the 2018-2019 school year shows that an estimated 24,177 public school students experienced homelessness over the course of the year. Of that total, 2,664 students were unsheltered, 2,518 were in shelters, 966 were in hotels/motels, and 18,029 were doubled up.”

2018 Homelessness

2019 Homelessness



Economy

Unemployment & UI

The KRADD region seen several residents unemployed seeking Unemployment Insurance. The highest surge of reported UI claims occurred during the month of March 2020 when Governor Andy Brashear announced the shutdown. Some of the top affected industries included Health Care and Social Assistance, Mining & Oil & Gas Extraction, and the accommodation and Food Services. Some notable companies that closed down during the shutdown later closed operations completely, JC Penney in Hazard, Perry County was one of the more favored retailers in the area, but closed not long after the COVID-19 Pandemic. WYMT wrote, “Employees were not the only ones dealing with emotions, however. Customers of all ages were saddened as they reflected on what they will miss the most.” ‘A huge loss’: J.C Penney in Hazard closes its doors after 30 years of service (wymt.com)

Of all the counties in the KRADD region, Perry County was the most impacted with the highest rate of unemployment and unemployment insurance claims. <https://kystats.ky.gov/>

Some of the businesses that will be closing permanently and/or have filed for bankruptcy include Ponderosa, Whayne Supply, Gordmans and the Miller Family Fun Center. - Hazard Herald, May 21, 2020 edition. City and county lose businesses, but not hope | Covid-19 | hazard-herald.com

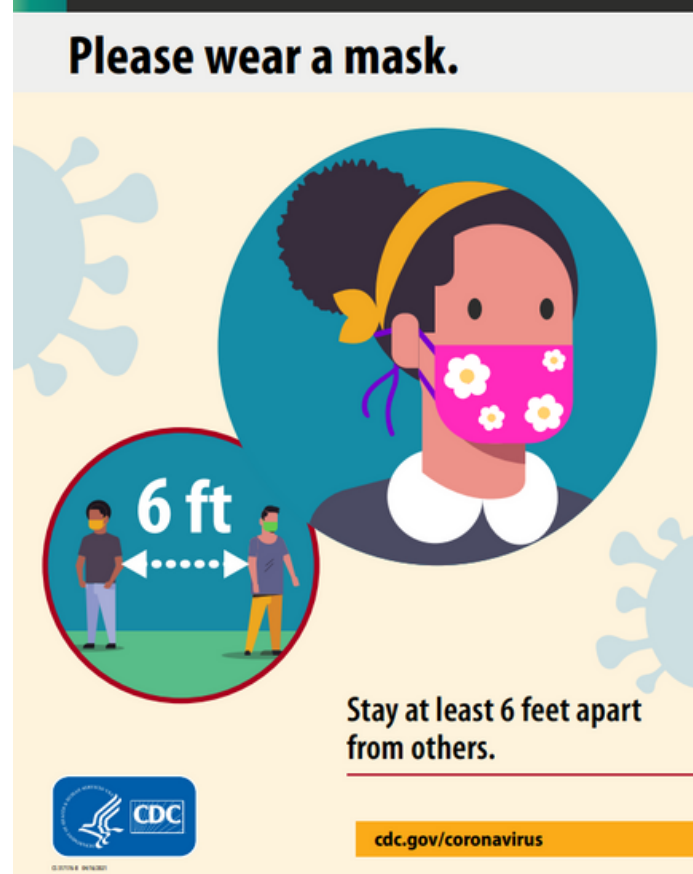


May , 2020

Business & Industry

Major changes occurred in business and industry during the COVID-19 Pandemic. When in-person services reopened, businesses across the region had signage and floor markers to remind customers of social distancing. Stores had masks available for patrons as they entered. Not every business required mask-wearing but most encouraged it. Businesses had to create new ways for customers to shop during the COVID-19 pandemic. A lot of businesses across the region implemented shop online and pick up at storefront options. With the lack of reliable broadband across the region, access for customers was difficult in areas.

Local Businesses in the region that did not survive the pandemic tended to already be struggling or close to closing prior to the pandemic. For many, the pandemic was the breaking point that led to business owners making their decision to close. The businesses that survived overcame those challenges with creativity and ingenuity.



Education



Educational institutions had one of the most difficult adjustments to the pandemic. The recommendation was made on March 20, 2020, that all schools cease in-person instruction until at least April 20, 2020. Public educational facilities immediately moved to online platforms and instructed in virtual classrooms. K-12 educators, as well as, higher education institutions faced challenges of getting the proper equipment into the hands of students, providing hotspots for students who did not have internet access, and transportation for students to available hotspots. Because the K-12 system is often the only source of nutritional food for some students, feeding families became another issue. Because food services were already in the school budget, some K-12 institutions began food programs to deliver meals to families.

November 2020 cases began to rise, and Perry County School district discontinued education all together. No online, no in-person. The take away from this decision was the loss of contact to children in volatile situations. Overall accountability scores for schools and districts in Kentucky were unavailable for 2020 due to the pandemic, similar to other states such as Iowa. Notice was posted on the Kentucky Department of Education website stating “Star Rating is not present due to the COVID-19 crisis. The Federal Classifications from 2018-2019 will remain in place for the 2019-2020 school year.” All KRADD counties gave their students chromebooks for remote instruction. To also help, parents were given Pandemic-EBT cards to assist with groceries in households.

Source:<https://www.kyschoolreportcard.com/organization/5521?year=2020>



Education



Early Childhood Profile 2020

Assessment	Eastern Streams Average	United 4 Kids Average	State-wide Average
Cognitive/General Knowledge	31.4	23.84	36.2
Kindergarten Readiness	46.94	38.42	51
Language and Communication	78.9	75.16	72.9
Physical Well Being	51.98	43.88	47.5
Self Help	47.5	41.32	51.5
Social Emotional	77.04	72.84	76.9

<https://kystats.ky.gov/Latest/ECP>, <https://kyecac.ky.gov>

Higher Education

Equipment was not the issue with higher education. Most students had a laptop or some form of technology, but the demand on the internet system and the lack of strong Wifi in the home created an issue.

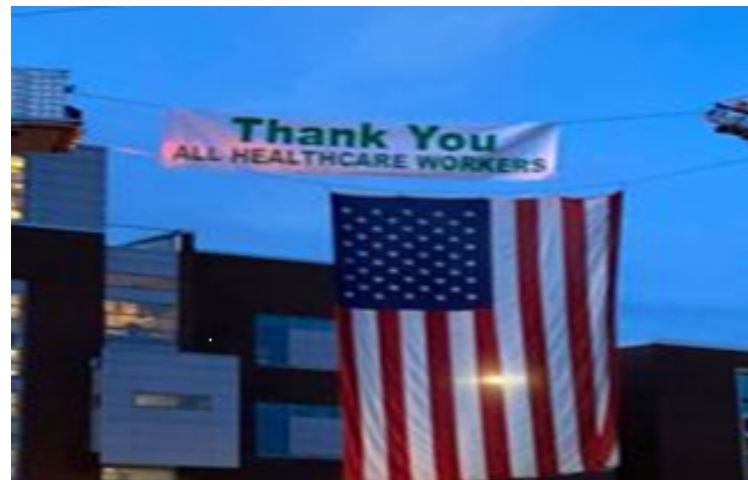
Educational institutions created mobile hot spots for students to complete work online.

HCTC organized food drives for students; students with children at home had the added burden of feeding their children as secondary schools went online as well. Schools organized local food drives to provide for students and their families.

Healthcare

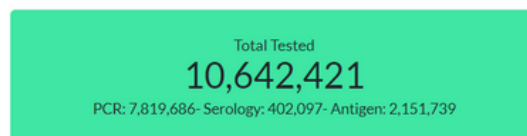
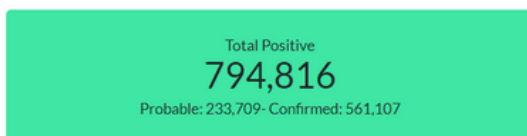


In healthcare, elective surgeries were halted. Screening tents for patients entering the health facility were set up and Covid-19 wards were separated from other patients at hospital facilities. Healthcare facilities, like other establishments, required temperature checks and names for contact tracing information. Early on, healthcare officials saw a decrease in patients as citizens feared catching coronavirus while visiting the doctor. The mental health of citizens became a concern as the pandemic remained front and center throughout the summer months and into the fall. The CDC and other public officials warned of a second surge, and as people moved indoors in the fall, positive test for the coronavirus increased. News of a vaccine came late fall of 2020, with the first doses administered in December, 2020.



City of Hazard hangs "Thank you, All Healthcare Workers" sign in front of ARH March 30, 2020

As the pandemic continued throughout 2020, pandemic hot spots experienced nurse shortages and travel nurses became the go-to, but travel nurses cost double, increasing hospital expenses.



Healthcare



Major hospital facilities include the Appalachian Regional Healthcare (ARH) system which operates thirteen hospitals in eastern Kentucky and two locations in West Virginia, with its headquarters in Hazard, Kentucky. Three of the hospital locations are in the KRADD region with hospitals in Hazard, ARH Whitesburg and Mary Breckinridge ARH Hospital, Hyden. In addition to hospital services, ARH runs several healthcare clinics in the region as well. Kentucky River Medical Center provides hospital services to Breathitt and surrounding counties. For general healthcare, local clinics are a combination of Federally Qualified Health Centers and Rural Health Clinics. Most clinics are members of the Kentucky Primary Care Association (KPCA), <https://www.kpca.net/>, who deliver services to the KRADD region through Primary Care Centers of Eastern Kentucky, headquartered in Hazard, Juniper Health covers Breathitt, Lee and Wolfe counties in the KRADD region and is a 2020 awardee from the Health Resources and Services Administration. Another KPCA member, Mountain Comprehensive Health, provides clinic services, telehealth, and dental services to, often times, hard-to-reach areas in eastern Kentucky.

The University of Kentucky and Grace Community Health Center, Inc. operate clinics in several KRADD counties as well. Little Flower Clinic, Hazard, was formed under the Kentucky Mountain Health Alliance in 2005 to meet the increasing health disparities in the region with a full range of services to meet the needs of the homeless population as well as those in deep poverty. A full list of KPCA members can be found on the website indicating if the facility is a rural health clinic or federally qualified health center among other information.

The poor health of eastern Kentucky residents is well documented but through federal and state programs, the counties are well connected to cover general health issues. In addition to additional clinics, the area focused on bringing more educational institutions to the area to provide care and health education for the population. ARH, along with Perry County Fiscal Court, recruited and opened the Galen School of Nursing in the old ARH hospital building.

Healthcare

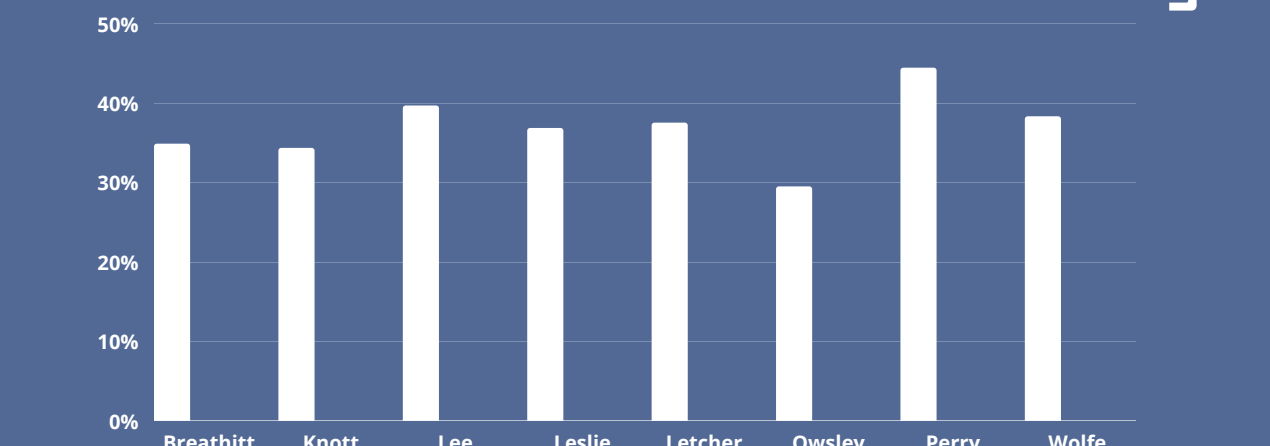


The larger healthcare networks allowed the facilities to share information and resources during the pandemic, however with increased cyberattacks, large healthcare system become more vulnerable and must take precautions to back up technology systems and invest in cyber security systems and trained technology staff.

Specialty services are more difficult to find and transportation to health services clinics can be a challenge because of the rural nature of the counties. Similar to other rural areas of the country, the population is not there to validate the cost for individual transportation services, and residents must rely on community to support their transportation needs. Middle KY and LKLP did provide transportation services to the KRADD region.

Under the direction of Kentucky Public Health and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, the KRADD region is serviced by two local health departments. Kentucky River District Health Department, <https://www.krdhd.org/site/>, covers seven of the eight counties while Breathitt County funds its own health department. Both health departments are well connected and provide leadership in times of distress. Kentucky River, similar to other institutions with several locations, was able to distribute resources according to need, pulling from areas with less impact and accommodating areas with high need. Kentucky River Health Department also provided updates and offered valuable covid-19 resources to our region.

Vaccination Rates in KRADD region



https://dashboard.chfs.ky.gov/views/KYPublicFacingDashboard_16191000580170/KentuckyCOVID-19Vaccination?iid=1&isGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&embed=y **Publish date:**

Tourism

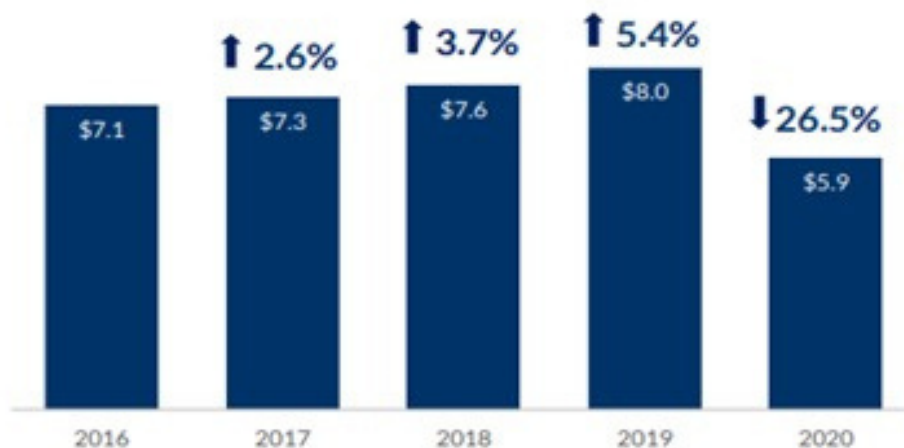


As a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, tourism was initially severely impacted. As restrictions came on travel and economic downturn occurred nation wide, tourism was initially impacted but then thrived as people saw this as a way to be outside while still social distancing.

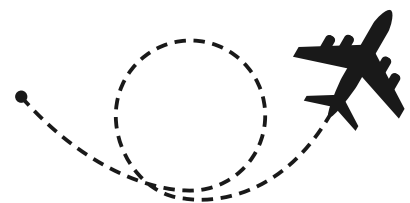
According to Kentucky Tourism, “travel did happen in 2020. Nearly 68 million visitors still traveled to and within the state of Kentucky. With travel limited, overnight visitors stayed longer when they did travel and travel party sizes grew as more families traveled together,” (Source: 2020 Economic Impact).

The KRADD region combines a total of 794 total jobs in the region. The KRADD region has a rich history with natural sights and locations for tourism and all counties are currently working toward promoting the region as a travel destination with many hiking trails and outdoor

Kentucky visitor spending and annual growth
Amounts in \$billions and year-on-year percentage growth



Source: Longwoods International; Tourism Economics



Tourism

While some festivals and activities were cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, some chose to operate and encourage those attending to follow the CDC guidelines and maintain a six foot distance between one another.

List of Cancelled Events

- Breathitt County Honey Festival 2020
- Owsley County Fair 2021
- Mountain Heritage Festival 2020
- Swift Silver Mine Festival 2020
- Mary Breckinridge Festival 2020
- Gingerbread Festival 2020
- Woolly Worm Festival 2020



Tourism

2021 Festivals

Perry County hosted its annual Black Gold Festival in 2021. Officials worked to maintain safety and understood everyone's fear regarding the COVID 19 pandemic. Handwashing stations were set up throughout the area and the City of Hazard Committee asked that anyone sick or not vaccinated, to please not attend the event. The Black Gold Festival offers citizens carnival games, rides, a parade, unique food and local businesses selling their products.



Source: Black Gold Festival Facebook page 2021

Breathitt County also hosted it's annual Honey Festival in 2021. Officials also worked to ensure everyone's safety during the event. Both festivals had large crowds as communities were eager to engage with one another after enduring the hardship the Covid-19 brought to everyone.



Source: Breathitt County Honey Festival Facebook page 2021

Tourism

2021 Festivals



Source: Knott County Gingerbread Festival Facebook page 2021

Breathitt and Perry weren't the only counties to see their festivals return in 2021. Many of the KRADD counties hosted their annual festivals in 2021 and they all were successful.

While Covid-19 brought many changes, it also taught us how important Tourism is for our region as although we were in the middle of the pandemic, tourism was still thriving in Southeastern Kentucky.



Source: Mountain Heritage Festival Facebook page 2021

Community Events

Community Events are the social backbone for many individuals in the region. Despite the on-going health crisis, many communities were able to improvise and adapt in order to continue an atmosphere of support and connection. Through creativity, communities in the KRADD region created and upheld many traditions in ways that were observant of CDC guidelines.

During the pandemic, to increase social distancing and promote a healthy lifestyle, many health and government officials encouraged outdoor activities such as hiking, fishing and exercise. This in turn brought to light how fortunate the KRADD region is to have natural beauty and outdoor recreations, as for many fishing, hiking and kayaking became an appropriate way to engage outside their homes while easily following CDC guidelines.

There were also community events to help bring the community together while maintaining and following CDC guidelines. For example, Letcher County hosted the "We're going on a bear hunt" event. For this event, the Letcher County Fiscal Court asked businesses to hide teddy bears in their window while the community walked through town trying to spot them all. This event helped boost morale during the pandemic.



Letcher County Fiscal Court

Community Events

2020 EXPLORE LETCHER CHALLENGE

Who is ready for a challenge?! During the month of September, visit 30 of the Letcher County locations on our list, and take a photo or selfie!

Once you visit, post the photos on social media with #exploreletcherchallenge! Participants that finish the challenge receive a custom designed medal!



-LIST TO BE RELEASED ON
SEPTEMBER 1, 2020

-THE LAST DAY TO POST PHOTOS IS
SEPTEMBER 30, 2020

-PLEASE USE THE PROVIDED LINK TO SIGN
UP! PLEASE SIGN UP ALL CHALLENGE
PARTICIPANTS INDIVIDUALLY!

Source: City of Whitesburg Facebook Page

KRADD counties hosted exploration events where citizens were challenged to visit 30 sites within their county and take a photograph of each. Once the citizen has completed all sites on the list, they were awarded a custom designed medal for their effort. This creative approach helped citizens stay engaged with their communities outside of their home. Both Letcher and Breathitt Counties participated in this event.

Breathitt County Public Library 2020 Explore Breathitt Fall Selfie Challenge

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Breathitt County Public Library | 39. Breathitt County Time Capsule |
| 2. Old Buck | 40. An old country store (open or closed) |
| 3. Crockettsville Farm or Cemetery | 41. Julian Carroll Airport |
| 4. Railroad Tracks (Don't Trespass) | 42. Grave of Dr. Baxton D. Cox |
| 5. Vanclave Post Office | 43. The Kentucky River |
| 6. A photo of a swinging bridge | 44. Round Bottom |
| 7. Robinson Forest | 45. Clayhole Post Office |
| 8. Morris Fork Church | 46. Rooster Rock (Frozen) |
| 9. Location of one of the missing blue bridges | 47. A Fall Display |
| 10. Canoe Fire Department | 48. Bad Tom Smith Wanted Poster |
| 11. South Jackson Underpass | 49. Jackson Police Memorial |
| 12. Jackson Federal Building | 50. Your favorite school |
| 13. Nailor's Rock | |
| 14. A WPA School house | |
| 15. An oil/gas well | |
| 16. Grave of Nathan and Virginia Noble | |
| 17. Panbowl Lake | |
| 18. Douthitt Park | |
| 19. A tombstone of a Veteran | |
| 20. The Elk View | |
| 21. Your favorite restaurant | |
| 22. Quicksand Community Center | |
| 23. Houston Mission School or church | |
| 24. Bethel Camp | |
| 25. Grave of James B. Marcum | |
| 26. Butter Point Road | |
| 27. Breathitt County Judicial Center | |
| 28. Jackson National Guard Armory | |
| 29. Morgue Fork | |
| 30. Frozen Flood Memorial | |
| 31. A coal truck | |
| 32. A Breathitt County Courthouse | |
| 33. Church at Highland Institute | |
| 34. Photo with someone you love | |
| 35. A country church | |
| 36. A reclaimed strip mine | |
| 37. Barwick School | |
| 38. Camp Lewis | |

Post a selfie of yourself alone or with your family at 30 of the 50 locations or items from this list and include these hashtags to complete the 2020 Breathitt County Library challenge:

#BreathittLibrary2020

#2020FallBCExplorer

#ExploreBreathittFall

An Explore Breathitt medal will be awarded for those who complete the challenge before November 30, 2020. Limited quantities.



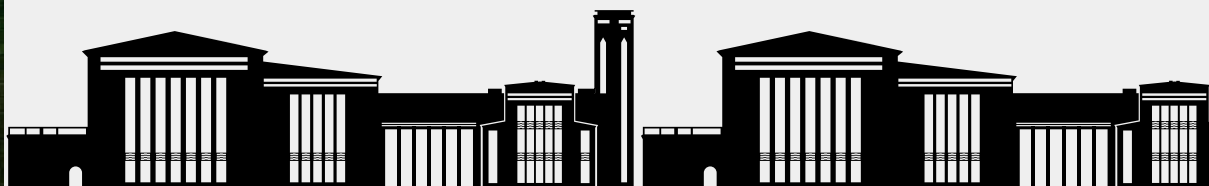
Source: City of Jackson Facebook Page

Government



Booneville City Hall lights up green in memory of those who have fallen during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Source: City of Booneville Facebook page 2020



KRADD cities and counties struggled at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. Many were low on PPE and did not know how to effectively communicate with their communities. As the pandemic continued, cities and counties were able to adjust and move forward with steady communication with their communities and becoming more prepared as the pandemic continued. In times of crisis, the League of Cities offered leadership and counties and cities often collaborated between each other to overcome obstacles and difficulties. Government Facilities were quickly closed to the public and once the pandemic lightened, masks were required indoors as well as social distancing.

Emergency Management

In the Spring of 2021, during the Covid pandemic, the KRADD region was hit with a massive flooding event. This event left cities such as Beattyville completely under water. A state of emergency was declared as a result of heavy rainfall. Because of this and the Covid pandemic, the KRADD region had to rethink their emergency management plans as the initial plans called for law enforcement to transport, but fear of Covid and lack of human resources made it impossible to carry out that plan. Many industries along with local government had to examine their emergency protocols again to be adjusted to the pandemic.

Government



Jails

The Covid-19 pandemic brought initial hardship to the Kentucky Department of Corrections. Since they have worked diligently to ensure the safety of their inmates. Recently, they have committed to following guidance from the CDC for Correctional and Detention Facilities. Some of the key initiatives include:

- In-person visitation shall be suspended when a facility experiences an outbreak
- Continue socially distancing where and when possible
- Unvaccinated staff are tested twice per week.
- Masks are mandatory for all staff and inmates

The entire Key Initiative list can be found at *Covid-19 Response - Department of Corrections (ky.gov)*.



Three Forks Regional Jail, Beattyville, KY

Community Services

KRADD is also served by multiple non-profit community service agencies. The two agencies within the KRADD region are Middle Kentucky Community Action Partnership and LKLP Community Action Council who partner with local agencies to provide low income residents assistance with Workforce Development, transportation, housing, senior support, food security, youth enrichment, early childhood education, family advocacy, asset building, home energy, health & well-being, and clean drinking water. These two agencies are part of the larger Kentucky Community Action partnership and are funded in part by Community Development Block Grant money. Senior support can also be found with the Area Development Districts.

Percentage of People in Poverty by County: 2015-2019 (census.gov)

Because poverty is directly related to educational levels, it is important to note all KRADD counties are focused on increasing educational levels. All counties, with the exception of Wolfe, increased the number of Bachelor Degrees in the last ten years. Wolfe has a decrease in poverty and decrease in BA attainment.

Bachelor Degree or Higher	2015-2019	2010-2014
Breathitt	15.2%	11.5%
Knott	14.9%	12.8%
Lee	8.3%	7.0%
Leslie	8.7%	8.2%
Letcher	12.1%	11.9%
Owsley	8.3%	7.0%
Perry	14.4%	13.0%
Wolfe	8.7%	10.7%

Community Services

Senior Centers

At the beginning of the COVID pandemic, senior centers were among the first to halt operations. For many seniors in the KRADD region, the only socializing they receive is through our senior centers and the variety of activities and events they offer them.

Across the region, meal delivery and curbside pick up increased as the ongoing COVID pandemic brought greater need for these services.

With increasing disasters and storms, senior centers began organizing drive through disaster preparedness events. Seniors were able to drive through and pick up their free disaster preparedness bags. The same was true for Covid 19 drive through preparedness events.

Although senior centers were already delivering meals and organizing events to help seniors, in March of 2021, a severe weather event left many of the KRADD counties in need of dire assistance. The Lee County senior center was flooded and most of the area had been submerged under water. Although this disaster struck, the Lee county senior center displayed immense resilience to continue offering help to seniors in need.



Infrastructure

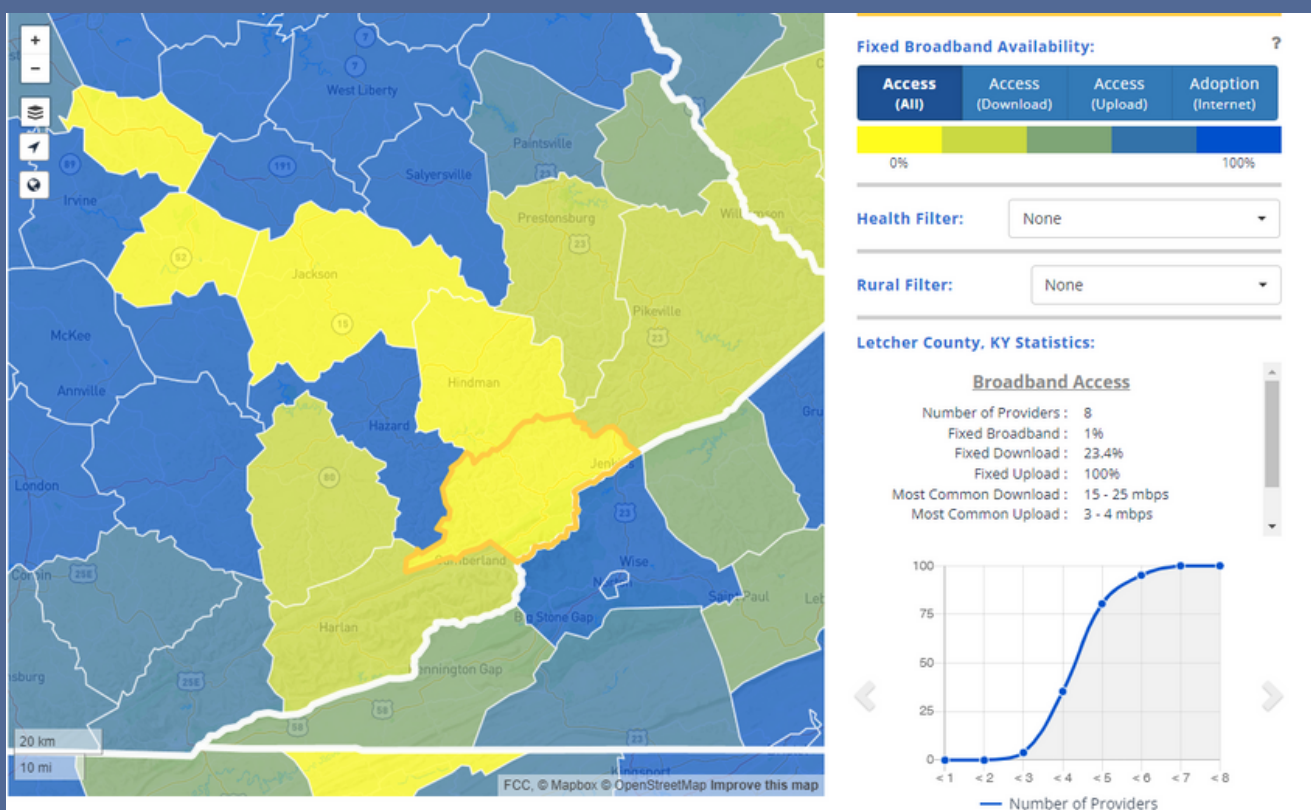
Broadband

Covid-19 significantly highlighted the need for improved broadband throughout the KRADD region. Access to reliable internet has been an on going issue for this region but the pandemic made it a priority concern.

With many people shifting from office conditions to working from home and along with an increase in online shopping and online telehealth services, the lack of broadband was felt across the entire country.

This is a consistent problem in the KRADD region and is regularly discussed between elected officials, citizens and other community leaders.

According to the FCC (Federal Communications Commission), Mapping Broadband Health in America, Broadband Gaps in America shows the Majority of the KRADD region as poor broadband access. Even reported data does not seem accurate as often times, broadband providers may offer certain speeds that consumers do not receive.



Recovery & Resiliency Strategies



The Recovery and Resiliency Strategies are meant to guide the KRADD communities back toward recovery, a sense of normalcy and to set forth toward a path of economic growth.

The goals for recovery and resiliency are different. For recovery, the purpose and actions set forth are to garner immediate impacts and to restore economic and cultural activity seen before the Covid pandemic. Resiliency is creating a more flexible and adaptable economy. This plan addresses what was done for immediate recovery and what can be done moving toward long term resiliency preparedness.

There were two stimulus packages that provided funds directly to local governments. First, the Coronavirus Relief Funds from the CARES Act in March of 2020 and this was used to jump start recovery. Much of the expenditures went toward PPE, additional unemployment assistance, first responders, and other items found useful to reestablish an economy in the middle of an ongoing pandemic.

The second major round of funding for local governments came in March of 2021 with the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds from the American Rescue Plan. These allocated funds focused on creating a resilient foundation for the region and nation. In addition to local funding, stimulus checks were sent to the general public which helped all households during the Covid pandemic.

Recovery & Resiliency Strategies

Regarding recovery, the KRADD region learned many lessons as they maneuvered through the pandemic. For example, many of the KRADD counties moved to hosting meetings virtually, which allowed everyone to continue to meet safely and stay in communication throughout the pandemic.

In another instance, the KRADD region was able to adapt to creatively engage with their community. Social media was used more frequently to spread information.



Aspects of Resiliency

Resiliency Key Factors

Resiliency is taking measures to ensure your area is prepared and withstand negative impacts for an emergency situation. The Resiliency Key factors are ways in which the KRADD region can become more prepared for a future pandemic or economic situation.



Broadband Access

Reliable and high speed connection



Education

Reliable broadband
Childcare
Access to technology



Tourism

Adaptability & Creativity
Online marketing of destinations
Preparedness plans



Communication

Steady communication throughout disaster events
Community engagement



Business & Industry

Disaster preparedness plans
Reliable and high speed broadband



Governments

Disaster preparedness plans
Reliable and high speed broadband
Stockpile of PPE

Community Action Plan



Throughout the pandemic, the KRADD region learned several ways to improve. Through discussion, these items listed below were the most common throughout the region. Accomplishing these goals will improve the quality of life and preparedness in the KRADD region.

Broadband Access

The Covid pandemic brought out the need of reliable, highspeed broadband connection throughout the KRADD region. As the pandemic worsened, many aspects of life switched over to being virtual. Telehealth, work from home and general communication were all done via internet connection. The KRADD region will become more resilient when strong broadband is offered throughout the region.

Disaster Preparedness

The Covid pandemic taught us that everyone can benefit from having emergency plans in place. Moving toward a more resilient future means having these plans ready before the next disaster strikes.

Creativity

Those that best survived throughout the pandemic showed their creativity and adaptability and their willingness to embrace how they do business. Being able to absorb impact and embrace change will benefit the KRADD region immensely.

Trust and Communication

During the Covid pandemic, everyone learned the importance of trust and communication. As the pandemic continued, our region learned to communicate in new ways and moving forward, will continue to communicate and trust their community.

Community Action Plan



Addressing Each Key

Moving forward, the KRADD region will focus on their listed themes of resiliency. Each Key will be improved by future completion of projects and plans which will strengthen our region's community and economy and meeting these needs.

Broadband

Upgrade Connectivity throughout region

Offer more connectivity hotspots

Pursue other alternatives

Disaster Preparedness

Creation of disaster plans which includes stockpile of PPE

Complete future projects to mitigate future disasters

Creativity

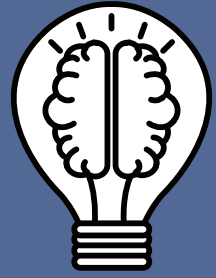
Continuing support of small, locally owned businesses and helping build their online presence

Trust & Communication

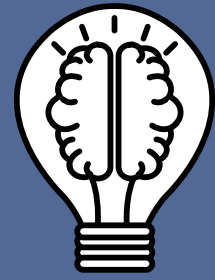
Continue engaging with the community; social media management

Become reliable source of information to the public

Community Projects



Community Projects



KRADD has compiled lists of projects that are in line with the recovery and resiliency aspects outlined in this document. These projects were gathered through discussion with local officials, the general public as well as fiscal court and city council meetings. Moving forward, it is vital to continue to expand this list. Also provided below is a list of completed projects that were completed during the pandemic and relates to resiliency and recovery. Everyone in the KRADD region worked tirelessly to ensure our economies recover from the pandemic.

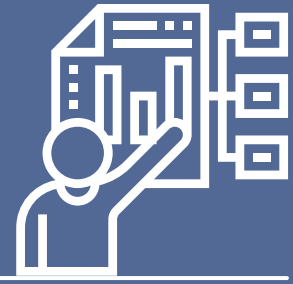
← Current & Completed Projects →

- CDBG-CV Utility Assistance
- Senior Meals
- Drive through pandemic relief tents
- Move to Video Conferencing

← Future Project Ideas →

- Broadband Development
- Water/Sewer Infrastructure updates
- Job Trainings
- Low-income Housing
- Infrastructure improvements: Gas, Electric etc
- Communication Upgrades
- Emergency Plans
- Transportation Infrastructure

Closing



In conclusion, the KRADD region was heavily impacted during the Covid pandemic. During the pandemic, jobs were lost, many were unemployed and our way of life changed nation wide. Our region learned several valuable lessons to move forward with. For instance, the key resiliency goals such as, Broadband, Disaster Preparedness, Creativity and Trust & Communication became the cornerstones for how we can begin to recover and move toward a more resilient future. With these goals being implemented, the KRADD region will become stronger, economically stable and prepared for the next disaster that may come. Most importantly, we learned the strength of our communities during the Covid pandemic and it was then we learned that the people in the KRADD region were strong, creative and resilient people. With our communities working together, we will be prepared in the future.

