

APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2018.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).


PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Roanoke
Program Title: Corporate Branding
Program Category: Communications

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Thomas C. Gates
Title: County Administrator
Signature: 

Roanoke County Marketing Brand Initiative

Category – Communications

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/BRIEF OVERVIEW

The results of a recent community-based Community Strategic Plan indicated public support of a new branding initiative to help differentiate Roanoke County from other nearby localities and to help promote economic growth and development. Ideally, a new Marketing Brand would also serve as a visual indicator of the quality of life Roanoke County residents enjoy and also align with the Board of Supervisors Vision Statement for Roanoke County.

Roanoke County staff undertook the project to create a new Marketing Branding for the County and to also refresh the County's Official Seal to define color standards and appropriate usage. When designing the new Marketing Brand, it was important that the two designs complement each other, not compete, and that each mark could stand on its own in a meaningful way.

The solution was creating a new Marketing Brand design that visually represented Roanoke County's departments and services, while elevating usage of the Official Seal to the Board of Supervisors, elected officials and public safety officials. To define colors, usage and special restrictions for each mark, a comprehensive Style Guide was developed to assist staff and partner agencies on the correct usage of each mark. The new Marketing Brand, revised Official Seal and the Style Guide can be found at <https://www.roanokecountyva.gov/branding>.

PROBLEM

The first challenge Roanoke County staff encountered when developing the Marketing Brand was to select a visually meaningful image to represent Roanoke County to its citizens, its partner agencies in the region, and to visitors and potential businesses from outside the area. Public comments during the County's Community Strategic Plan placed importance on the County's branding efforts to both promote economic development and to create a unique identity for the County in support of tourism and outdoor recreation.

The surrounding localities of Roanoke City, the City of Salem, and the Town of Vinton have established brands derived from either official seals or based on local landmarks. Roanoke County's challenge was to identify a symbol or image that was unique not only to our region, but also unique among our neighbors in the greater Roanoke Valley.

The selection of colors and overall shape also played a role in the design, as staff sought to create a distinctive visual brand that also complemented other logos and brands throughout the region. An ongoing marketing campaign by Virginia's Blue Ridge tourism agency promotes the outdoor activities in the area, and it was also important that the new brand highlight Roanoke County as a distinct outdoor recreation destination within the region.

Above all the other challenges faced, implementing the new Marketing Brand could not incur any increases to existing County department budgets.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Staff with graphic design skills from the Public Information Office and the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department developed several draft concepts for review by Roanoke County's administration and department directors. Comments during executive level meetings suggested that staff incorporate an image of the ever-popular McAfee Knob into the design. McAfee Knob is a well-known destination for both local and out-of-state hikers of the Appalachian Trail. The knob and its distinctive profile have been featured in numerous tourism publications, appears on Virginia vehicle license plates, and even serves as the setting for a feature film (*A Walk in the Woods* – 2015, starring Robert Redford and Nick Nolte).

The top drafts incorporating the prominent McAfee Knob landmark were presented to the Board of Supervisors at its January 2017 retreat session, along with the rationale for creating a separate Marketing Brand to reflect Roanoke County's quality of life and to help promote the County as a regional outdoor recreation destination. The Board agreed with the concept and offered staff suggestions for revision and refinement of the brand. The Board also stated that implementing the new Marketing Brand should not increase the County's annual budget.

Using internal staff with graphic design skills to brainstorm and develop the Marketing Brand kept development costs to a minimum (staff time), and as part of the overall project staff created a launch campaign that would phase in the new Marketing Brand over time to minimize the impact on departments' annual budgets.

After the Board's approval of the concept, graphic design staff at the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department re-worked the design to include the profile of McAfee Knob and hiker

silhouette into a distinctive and instantly recognizable image. Versions of the image were created for both horizontal and vertical usage.

Horizontal



Vertical



IMPLEMENTATION

Internal Implementation

Staff designers from the Public Information Office and the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department showcased the final designs at the County's Leadership Meeting in April 2017. The Leadership Meeting consisted of nearly 80 staff executives, mid-levels managers and supervisors from across the County's departments. Reaction to the new was mostly positive, and a commitment to providing departments with the standard templates, images, and guidelines for daily usage helped solidify support of the new Marketing Brand.

Staff worked to develop department-specific versions of the new Marketing Brand, and created templates for letterhead, envelopes, business cards and PowerPoint presentations featuring the Marketing Brand. All files for department usage were delivered as a branding package, customized for each department's use. Departments were encouraged to start using

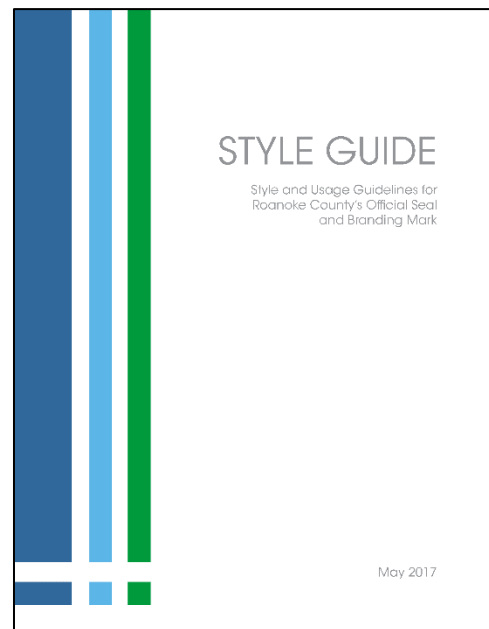
the new brand on all public e-newsletters, e-mail signatures, letterhead, flyers and other public facing media.

Department Marketing Brand Samples



Development of Roanoke County Style Guide

As part of the overall launch of the Marketing Brand, Public Information Office staff developed a comprehensive Roanoke County Style Guide to document the specific colors, usage and restrictions for using the new brand. The Style Guide graphically illustrates how the new branding mark can be used, and has proven beneficial for both County staff and outside partner agencies alike. The new guide can be found at <https://www.roanokecountyva.gov/branding>.



Staff also included a newly refined design for the traditional Official Seal of Roanoke County within the Style Guide, using the opportunity to define the colors and usage of the County's Official Seal for the first time since its creation in 1968. The new Style Guide also illustrates the different uses for the Official Seal versus the Marketing Brand.

With no funding available to launch a comprehensive branding campaign, the Public Information Office looked first at no-cost and lowest cost opportunities to spread the Marketing Brand to as many people as possible. The first choices for the new brand's debut were on the County's website and social media channels. The next choices included vehicles within the County's fleet, as the decals could be replaced over time and during routine maintenance at the County's Fleet Service Center. Over the next few months, opportunities within other departments allowed even greater promotion of the new brand.

Public Debut of the Marketing Brand

The Public Information Office hosted a November 2017 press conference to officially announce the new Marketing Brand and showcase the mark on fleet vehicles, signs and other official uses. Two new trash collection trucks acquired by the County's General Services Department also presented staff with a unique opportunity to apply the new branding to vehicles that would soon begin circulating throughout County neighborhoods.

New Marketing Brand Decals on Fleet Vehicles Debuted at Press Conference



During spring 2017 staff also worked to complete the design of new gateway signs in cooperation with local Virginia Department of Transportation officials. Four new gateway signs were produced with the first installations occurring in November 2017 along major roads leading into the County.



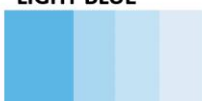
The Roanoke County departments of Human Resources and Communication and Information Technology have recently implemented new, more secure employee key-card badges, and both agreed to include the Marketing Brand on more than 800 new badges in an effort to create a more consistent to badges among employees.

INNOVATION

The design of Roanoke County's new Marketing Brand represents a bold break from traditional municipal seals typically used by localities. The distinctive profile of McAfee Knob is an iconic and tangible representation of the outdoor recreation only available in Roanoke County, and the triangular shape represents a progressive, forward motion to the upper right. The hiker silhouette also evokes a more personal and emotional response in its audience, versus the traditional focus on distant buildings and landmarks often seen in other municipal seals.

By claiming McAfee Knob as its Marketing Brand, the County's marketing efforts are amplified each and every time this iconic landmark is featured in other media, and allows the County to further capitalize its brand value through the efforts of other organizations.

The specific colors selected for the Marketing Brand hold specific meanings as well. Over and above the traditional bold colors typically used by local government, these color associations also complement the concepts expressed in the Board of Supervisors’ Vision Statement for the County of Roanoke, specifically:

GREEN	ASSOCIATIONS
	Health, prosperity, growth, tranquility, nature
DARK BLUE	
	Peace, stability, trust, security, water
LIGHT BLUE	
	Serenity, imagination, openness, sky

“Roanoke County is a vibrant, innovative, and scenic community that values its citizens, heritage, and quality of life.”

Staff chose the modern, clean typeface ITC Avante Garde for the text, which provides a visual contrast to the soft, nature-based image and helps retain readability at small sizes.

COLLABORATION

The creation of the new Marketing Brand has truly been a collaborative effort within the County. The Public Information Office led the project and coordinated design drafts through staff at the Parks, Recreation and Tourism department, and advocated for the new Marketing Brand at the administrative and elected official level of the County. Staff at Parks, Recreation and Tourism developed the final design after numerous rounds of drafts, and created the final design used today.

New Gateway Sign installed on Route 419/Electric Road, leaving the City of Salem and entering Roanoke County.



Parks and Recreation also contributed to the effort in other ways, by funding the four new gateway signs through its existing department sign budget and by fostering early adoption of the brand through its website, social media, household recreation catalogs and other materials.

Roanoke County's General Services Department and Fleet Service Center were also instrumental in helping spread the new Marketing Brand to the public. Vehicle graphics are part of the annual fleet maintenance budget, and the new brand was applied to County vehicles as they rotated through routine maintenance.

In a recent effort to standardize employee identification badges, Human Resources and Communications and Information Technology joined in an effort to replace outdated badges with the new logo when issuing new secure key-card badges for employees.

It is important to note that each of the accomplishments above were achieved within the current existing budgets of the departments involved, with each project focused on promoting and featuring the new Marketing Brand as wide and as deep as feasible within exiting budget constraints.

Sample employee secure key-card badge featuring the new Marketing Brand.



MODEL FOR OTHERS

Roanoke County's journey to developing a new Marketing Brand began with its Community Strategic Plan process, where public comments indicated support for a new brand to support economic growth and development. As part of that process, the Board of Supervisors Vision Statement provided guidance on the visual concept, while executive staff provided valuable input on the brand's visual content.

A key part in the development was the realization that Roanoke County did indeed have a famous and recognizable landmark to use as the focus of its branding efforts. Other localities should also look within their County limits to find the iconic experiences and locations easily taken for granted by long-time residents and embrace these aspects of their community in their ongoing campaigns to promote growth and economic development.

Stakeholder acceptance and review of the final design is important throughout any branding initiative, as well as a comprehensive plan to debut or roll-out the new brand. Above all, an interdepartmental commitment to using and promoting the new brand is vital to

spreading the new brand to as many residents, visitors and businesses as quickly as possible, in the most cost effective manner available.