



ROANOKE
REGIONAL
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE

NEWS RELEASE

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CHAMBER AND COOL CITIES PARTNER ON GREEN INITIATIVE

The Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce announced today at its “Economic Summit VI: It’s ALL About the Economy” that the Chamber is partnering with Roanoke Valley Cool Cities Coalition to launch a green initiative for its members. This is an outgrowth from the focus of last year’s Economic Summit on sustainability.

Joyce Waugh, president of the Chamber said, “This is a voluntary program that will give interested businesses an opportunity to reduce waste and save money while being green business stewards of the Roanoke region. It’s a way for even small firms that want to brand themselves as being green, to do so.” The program will be based on a green checklist developed by Cool Cities Coalition that includes water use, waste disposal, indoor air quality, pollution control, and energy use.

The Chamber makes things better for business by providing information, networking, small business assistance, and advocacy for over 1,300 members, which employ over 90,000 with an estimated annual payroll of \$2.7 billion. For its part, Cool Cities includes many regional leaders in energy conservation, renewable energy and green business practices. Its 165 affiliates represent over 15,000 citizens. Nearly two dozen organizations are already members of both the Chamber and Cool Cities.

Diana Christopulos, who chairs Cool Cities, said, "We are very pleased to join the Chamber in this unique partnership."

Cool Cities will develop program content and verify that applicants complete checklist requirements. The Chamber believes that this third party verification strengthens the integrity of the program. “Our goal is to conduct a pilot program with up to ten businesses this summer and move forward this fall with the on-going program. Businesses that meet the elements on the checklist will be recognized in a number of ways, including a listing in the Chamber’s quarterly *Business Connections* magazine and given a special designation,” noted Waugh. “The pilot will give us a chance to work out all the details.”

The Chamber is considering several working titles for the program:

- Green Biz Approved
- Earth Friendly, Roanoke Region Worthy
- Cool Green Biz
- Go Green Roanoke Region
- Green Seal of Happiness

They've asked members to participate in the process by going to green@roanokechamber.org and voting for the name they like best.

About the Chamber

Established in 1890, the mission of the Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce is to make things better for business by providing information, networking, small business assistance, and advocacy for over 1,300 members.

About Cool Cities

Founded in August 2006, Roanoke Valley Cool Cities Coalition is an independent, all-volunteer, Virginia Nonstock (non-profit) Corporation, organized as a 501(c)(3) public charity. The coalition consists of more than 160 member/affiliates including businesses, non-profit groups, and individual activists. In all, coalition members represent over 15,000 area citizens. Familiarly known as "Cool Cities", the coalition is managed by a volunteer board of directors headed by Dr. Diana Christopulos of Salem. The board is comprised of representatives from the business, environmental, and academic communities; a full list of board members can be found on the coalition's web site www.rvccc.org. RVCCC has an active community outreach program and offers free lectures and a variety of presentations to a wide range of community groups. Cool Cities board members are actively involved with local governments to encourage and assist them as they seek to implement smart energy solutions that will benefit taxpayers and the environment.