

For Immediate Release

Contact: Amy Whittaker
Title: Public Information Officer
Cell: (540) 589-3089
awhittaker@roanokecountyva.gov

Roanoke County Ranked Seventh Best County in Virginia

(Roanoke County, VA) — The Fourth Economy Community Index found that Roanoke County ranks higher than 94 percent of counties nationwide, as well as seventh out of 80 counties in Virginia.

The Community Index is a yearly report that ranks counties nationwide with a population of 20,000 or more — for a total of 1,837 out of the 3,007 localities in the United States. It measures economic strength through 20 indicators across five themes:

- **Investment:** Active businesses, access to capital and investment in physical infrastructure.
- **Talent:** A growing workforce with education and job skills, equipped to excel in high-wage opportunities.
- **Sustainability:** Transportation, land use, and environmental conditions that promote healthier lifestyles and a healthier planet.
- **Place:** Affordable housing and transportation options that provide access to recreational and cultural amenities.
- **Diversity:** Personal and professional interaction across lines of race/ethnicity, age, and wealth.

“While we know there is no single recipe for economic success, we also know that these five areas are critical ingredients in vibrant communities everywhere,” states Fourth Community. “Communities that score highly across our categories do not come in one mold, but many—from rural cultural hubs to small, developing cities to booming metro areas.”¹

The study breaks down localities by population into small, mid-sized, large, and mega-sized counties. With a reported population of 45,538 people, Roanoke County is considered a small-sized county.

“Generally, more densely populated places have economic and cultural assets that more rural or suburban places do not, and the model picks up on this,” explains Fourth Community. “It’s important to compare among similarly-sized places. That’s why we’ve organized the counties by size categories. There are many small communities that do well in our model.”¹

Roanoke County ranked sixth out 857 small-sized counties nationwide and placed in the top 10 percent of all counties in the Place category for affordable housing and transportation. It was also recognized as Above Average in the Investment, Talent, and Sustainability categories.

Fourth Economy publishes the Community Index each fall and new data is expected in September 2019.

###

¹ “Top 5 Questions About the Community Index Tool,” Fourth Economy Blog, November 6, 2018.