Get Ready to Hang your Virtual Shingle Online and Welcome the Waves of Web Surfers, Thanks to the VGA.

Virginia's Growth Alliance (VGA) is giving small businesses the opportunity to get noticed –online, while giving consumers more options to Shop Local.

Understanding that many localities and small businesses within our rural region aren't able to develop and maintain a professional website, the VGA has launched an online e-commerce site and business directory, free of charge, to supplement existing websites or even be used by some businesses and localities as their primary online presence.

ShopLocalVGA.com will provide the capability for regional businesses to sell both physical and digital products through one dedicated online store. Site visitors will be able to purchase from multiple vendors in one transaction and the funds will be distributed automatically to each vendor. Vendors will receive order information for only their sales.

Vendors will manage their products and orders through an easy-to-use control panel, and can even create coupons that can be applied to their products.

Participation in the **ShopLocalVGA.com** online store is **free** of charge (except for associated credit card fees which will be deducted automatically by the merchant services provider). Free workshops will be held throughout the region to assist businesses in setting up their store section.

Service-based businesses are not forgotten, though. ShopLocalVGA.com also includes a business directory to help promote these businesses. Information about why local shopping is so important is also included, and a colorful infographic is available for download.

VGA recognizes that the majority of new jobs and business growth come from small business, and that local businesses are more dedicated to the community, give more to local non-profits, and help to make our communities more unique – which in turn boosts our tourism efforts and makes the region more desirable as a place to live. As a result, VGA has dedicated a large part of its mission to promoting an entrepreneurial environment and supporting small businesses.

Virginia's Growth Alliance is a regional economic development marketing organization serving the city of Emporia, as well as Amelia, Brunswick, Buckingham, Charlotte, Cumberland, Greensville, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway and Prince Edward counties. To learn more about the VGA, visit www.vagrowth.com.

To sign up for ShopLocalVGA, email info@vagrowth.com or call Tina Morgan @ 434-218-0218.