



VIEW*S* & VISIONS

A publication of Bowles Rice LLP

Fall 2016

The Power and the Promise of the Eastern Panhandle

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FROM OUR
**MANAGING
PARTNER**

Tom Heywood is Managing Partner of Bowles Rice. He has significant experience in health care, corporate, finance and commercial law, and leads the firm's Government Relations Team.

The State Journal named him one of the state's "Ten Most Influential Business Leaders" in 2012.

He served as Chief of Staff to the Honorable Gaston Caperton, former Governor of the State of West Virginia, from 1990 to 1993.

Heywood was elected as a trustee of the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation in 2012 and is the chairman of the Kanawha County Library Foundation. He has received many awards for his community involvement and serves on numerous charitable and nonprofit boards. He also participates actively in various business and trade associations.

In recognition of his many contributions to the legal profession and community, he was named a Fellow of the American Bar Association in 2010. He also received *The State Journal's* 2010 "Who's Who in West Virginia Business" award.

One of the brightest beacons in West Virginia is the area known as our Eastern Panhandle, encompassing three counties (Morgan, Berkeley and Jefferson) and bordering the states of Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania. Possessed of a unique and fascinating history, a tremendous growth dynamic, and "a future so bright we have to wear shades," the Eastern Panhandle is a model for how to create a place where people will choose to live, work and play for decades to come.

Here at Bowles Rice we have called the Eastern Panhandle home since January 1, 1989, when our first merger – with the Martinsburg firm of Rice, Douglas and Shingleton (which has roots dating to 1889 in the Eastern Panhandle) – became an important step in our becoming the successful regional law firm we are today. I remember well traveling on a bus with my partners from Charleston in the fall of 1988 to meet with our prospective partners in Martinsburg, and experiencing the wonder and beauty of the Eastern Panhandle for the first time.

The authors in this edition of *Views & Visions* tell the story well. Some common themes about the Eastern Panhandle emerge from the diverse articles in the pages that follow. Location is a blessing. Growth creates opportunities – and challenges – not faced by communities with stagnant or shrinking populations. Education and training are keys to the future. Entrepreneurialism and innovation are essential ingredients to vibrancy and sustainability. Collaboration is a must. And, investment and infrastructure set the table for continued success.

West Virginia is my home state, and the place I love the best. At Bowles Rice, we have the privilege of helping businesses, organizations and individuals from across West Virginia and the region accomplish their goals and objectives, and I am constantly struck by how generously they all give back to the communities they call home, and how passionate each is about moving our state and region forward. And, as the following articles attest, that commitment runs deep among our clients and friends in the Eastern Panhandle.

In many parts of West Virginia, these are challenging times indeed. I think that positive models, such as that offered by the Eastern Panhandle, are more important than ever, because they remind us that success is very possible.

My thanks goes to each of the authors in this edition, not only for taking the time to share their views and visions, but also for the energy, effort, leadership and commitment they have demonstrated over the years. You have helped make the Eastern Panhandle the fabulous place it is today. Your positive example and success encourages us all. Thanks to you, I am convinced that the best is yet to come, not only for the Eastern Panhandle but also for our state and region as a whole.

Enjoy the articles in the pages that follow. If you are as inspired as I am after reading them, I invite you to join me in re-committing to building a bright future in the communities each of us calls home, following and honoring the example of our authors. A bright future to you all! ▾