



Highlands Creative Economy Council
Monthly Meeting

Thursday, January 26th at 10 am (ZOOM)

- Welcome!
 - Introductions
- Eastern updates
 - Workforce trainings, Drone trainings (follow up with Melissa Shockey, email Melissa.Shockey@easternwv.edu)
 - Free Monthly Marketing Training Videos: <https://easternwv.edu/advancement-innovation/economic-development/marketing-trainings/>
 - Agricultural trainings with Farm Fellows in January: link to program and classes <https://easternwv.edu/ag-innovation/>
 - 2023 Agritourism Summit SAVE THE DATE: 10-3:30 Wednesday, March 15th at the Misty Mountain Event Barn. Will feature 4 recurring panels on agritourism (anything that happens on a farm). Free to attend. Will debut agritourism in Potomac Highlands brochure.
 - Welcome to Maya Paul, Ag Innovation Program Coordinator
- AFNHA updates
 - Interpretation committee – Museum Planning group met yesterday, next meeting today at 3:00. America250 storytelling program will meet on Feb 17. We will also develop guidelines for upcoming grant cycle. If interested, you can attend at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88990017450?pwd=RmVES1VPWUxZMFhoUzJZQlNzQUFHZz09> or email phyllisb@afnha.org
 - Partnership Planning meeting Friday, January 27 10 am: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87224957321>
- Guest Speaker
 - Eric Thompson - Access on the GO – all volunteer organization that promotes accessibility for livability and business profitability
 - [Free Accessibility Resources](#)
 - Existing barriers for travelers with disabilities are the same as for other travelers. What do you need to attract any guest? They need to know the place exists and that it has what they are looking for (supporting documentation with enough info). Pictures showing ADA accommodations are very helpful, as existing descriptions may be inaccurate. Go through ADA self-assessment checklist (see resource list).

- People with disabilities make up one of the largest markets. Good accommodations will help overall business (word of mouth). Tax credits are available for tax liable organizations (can sometimes be managed by non-profit). ADA act is an opportunity rather than obligation. Pies & Pints good example of expansion. See market research and Tax Credit Info at- <https://tinyurl.com/AccessOnTheGo-Market>
- There is a lack of existing inventory of existing infrastructure. We should combine local guides for a comprehensive regional inventory. Encourage CVBs to make accessibility themed guides. Make your inventory highly visible/easy to find on your webpage (like Canaan Valley Resort or WV Tourism).
- Recommended process: get buy-in from businesses by sharing the value of accessibility, do the ADA self-check list, create a transition plan, and make your inventory.
- Eric is trying to start a training program for how to do the assessments, where to find the funding, etc. There are gaps in resources for non-profits/governments/orgs without tax liability. Grants will often prioritize accessibility projects.
- Michele Moure-Reeves- Are there adaptive non-motorized flat water crafts? Creating Abilities sells parts to outfit canoes/kayaks. Info about public access sites in [Free Resource link](#) (River Management Society). There is also a recreational checklist in larger ADA checklist.
- Attendee Discussion / Extended Networking –
 - Jonathan Bellingham (Capon Springs and Farms)- There is a growing audience for hot springs vacations, and they are collaborating regional historic springs tours. Capon Springs will be hosting the first ever fling golf tournament in WV. See <http://www.flinggolf.com> for info
 - Tina Ladd (Hampshire County CVB)- Potomac Highlands Sportsman & Outdoor Show at Hampshire County Fairgrounds on March 11-12! It's a brand new thing here! <https://cometohampshire.com/wildinwv/>
 - Lyndsay- There's still time to register for Mountain State Maple Days- February 18, 2023 & March 18, 2023 businesses wishing to participate can register here: <https://wvmspa.org/maple-days-entry-form-2/>
 - Amber Higgins (Barbour County Development Authority)-
 - Upcoming Barbour County events:

Race to Lil Moe's, Philippi - Sunday, April 2nd; Philippi Art Stroll - Friday, April 14th, 5-8pm; Artefaktual Comics and Games Free Comic Book Day - Saturday, May 6th Stop by Artefaktual Comics and Games on S Main St in Philippi for more info; Blue & Gray Reunion - First weekend in June; LurchFest - Saturday, August 5th (our third year, already a top WV one-day festival!)

The Golden Rule in Belington is now hosting artisan markets every Friday from

10am-6pm, and potential business operators are invited to visit to see the kitchen expansion in process, projected to be ready spring 2023 for a possible coffee shop/eatery.

Also WVU BAD Buildings Program (BAD = Brownfield, Abandoned, Dilapidated) will be hosting live meetings in both Philippi and Belington during January: Philippi: Thu, Jan 26, 6pm, 17 North (former Wanderlust) ; Belington: Mon, Jan 30, 6pm, Golden Rule

- Anne Beardslee (Elkins-Randolph County Tourism)- Elkins area was chosen for the Ascend remote work program. Winter train running through St. Patrick's day. Ramps & Rail will take place April 29. EAST (Elkins Area Shared Trails) moving along with IMBA and ARC grants to develop properties for trails.
- Michele Moure-Reeves (Hardy County CVB)- Lost River Trails Coalition will host the Lost River Trail Run May 6 at Lost River State Park- Will fund the new trails at the Park.
- Brenna Dugan (West Virginia Department of Tourism) – Please send your event listings to Brenna at brenna.c.dugan@wv.gov

Save The Date! The next meeting is **February 23rd, 2023**, at 10 AM on Zoom.

Zoom Registration: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86099367281>

This will be an open discussion; everyone is welcome.

Other news:

WV Tourism Webinar Feb 9th - Vacation Rental Tips and Best Practices with Vrbo

Register at https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_XTN7IOhkT-qr3wncI4eIJw

Housing Solutions in Rural Recreation Communities – Webinar February 15th

Register at https://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_0FJKcvomT7OUX0ZbusCweA

National Fund for Sacred Places - <https://fundforsacredplaces.org/>

matching grants of \$50,000 to \$250,000 to congregations undertaking significant capital projects at historic houses of worship. Letters of Intent due February 24, 2023.

WV Agritourism Initiative Online Course - REGISTER AT: <https://go.wvu.edu/agritourismcourse23>

The entire course package is \$100 and includes all course materials, online speakers, certificate of completion, membership in the West Virginia Agritourism Association, and a West Virginia Agritourism Liability Sign.