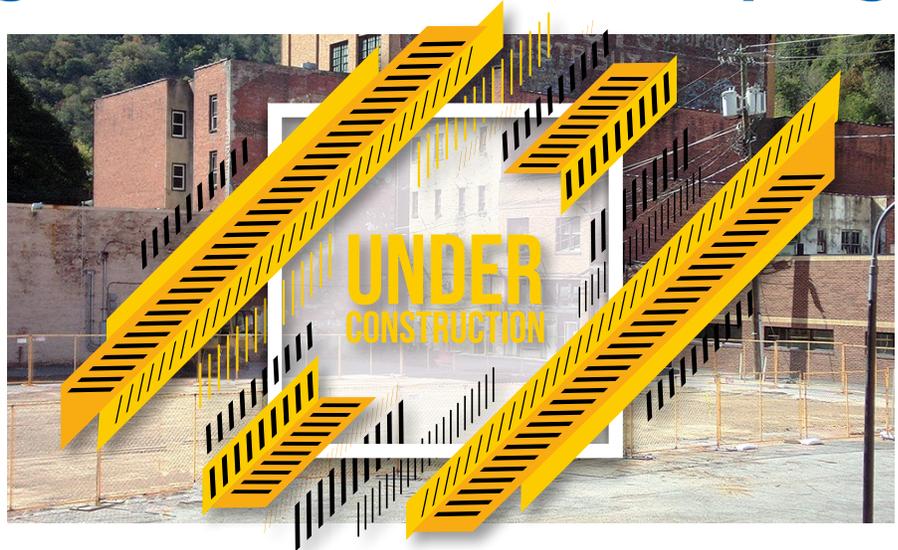


Stay connected with McDowell

McDowell County is an American story that deserves a new chapter—one filled with promise, with goodwill, with the type of shared commitment that offers solid reasons to believe in a brighter future. Be a part of this historic partnership and show your support for McDowell's children and the greater community by joining the effort at www.ReconnectingMcDowell.org.

Renaissance Village to Break Ground Next Spring

Reconnecting McDowell's board of directors and partners meeting was held at "Tamarack: Best of West Virginia" on Sept. 24-25. Renaissance Village, Reconnecting McDowell's housing project that seeks to address the County's housing shortage, took a significant step forward at the fall meeting. The board approved a redesigned plan and adopted a resolution which stated that, subject to identifying financing and including further fundraising, Renaissance Village's construction will begin in spring 2019. The building will cost an estimated \$7 million and will have two floors of apartments and two floors of retail/commercial space.



Reconnecting McDowell and First Book Partnership Supplies 'Care Closets'

Reconnecting McDowell and its nonprofit partner First Book unveiled "Care Closets" at a town hall meeting Sept. 24 at Mount View High School. All County schools will have Care Closets that include coats, T-shirts, hygiene products, school supplies and other items. These closets expand the work of Abby's Closet and A Work of Heart Ministry. Abby's Closet is a memorial organization that provides school supplies to some schools; Lori Scarberry's Work of Heart Ministry provides gently used clothing to the schools. Our partner, the United Way of Southern West Virginia, is providing shoes and socks through its Equal Footing program.

The Care Closets' supplies were provided by the American Federation of Teachers at a cost of about \$11,000 for the 10 county schools. All of the items in the closets were purchased on the First Book Marketplace at a 50 to 90 percent discount off the retail rate. "These closets are stocked with a variety of clothing, personal-care items and school supplies. We want families to know that kids shouldn't have to go without a warm coat or blanket during the winter months or hygiene products because they can't afford them," says AFT President Randi Weingarten. "Reconnecting McDowell's goal is to make sure kids have the resources to thrive in school."

The items in each Care Closet should last for about six months. To help replenish the closets, donations in any amount can be made at <http://bit.ly/careclosets>.



▲ These clothes were among the supplies that were unveiled at the town hall.

Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellows Host Community Meetings in McDowell County

Staff from Reconnecting McDowell and the West Virginia Community Development Hub successfully collaborated on a grant application that will support two Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellows' work in McDowell County until February 2019. They are the first Hunger Fellows to be placed in West Virginia. The Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellowship is hosted by the Congressional Hunger Center in Washington, D.C. The center is working to end hunger around the country and around the world by 2030. Its strategy is to provide training for a new generation of social justice leaders through the Emerson National and the Leland International Hunger Fellowship programs, which are designed to bridge the gaps in understanding and enabling action between anti-hunger and anti-poverty work at both the community and national policy levels.

The two fellows placed in the County—Mackenzie Aime and Lakeisha

Perkins—are working with Reconnecting McDowell on a Foodshed Improvement Plan and a Farm-to-School Project. The Foodshed plan will offer project and policy recommendations aimed at prioritizing food access, building an economically thriving food system for all local residents, and developing local markets. The plan will be a collaborative effort involving city officials, local leaders, food producers, business owners, organizations and local residents. Mackenzie and Lakeisha have organized 11 community meetings to gather the opinions and perspectives of County residents on necessary improvements or expansions for food choices, agricultural development and fresh food access in the region. The information gathered at these meetings will serve as a directive for the Foodshed plan.

All County residents are encouraged to attend one of the meetings. Here are the upcoming dates and locations:



November 28	6:30 – 8:30 p.m.	Davy Church 88 Gospel Avenue Davy, WV
December 4	6 – 8 p.m.	Keystone City Hall 144 W Main St Keystone, WV
December 5	6 – 8 p.m.	Phoenix Center 275 Virginia Avenue Welch, WV

For more information on the projects, contact:
Mackenzie Aime: maime@hungercenter.org or 304-993-9441
Lakeisha Perkins: lperkins@hungercenter.org or 304-993-9458

Want to get involved or learn more?

For more information about Reconnecting McDowell or to find out how you can get involved, contact Chad Webb (cwebb@aftwv.org) or Debra Elmore (delmore@aftwv.org or 304-552-5766).

SEEKING MENTORS for the Broader Horizons Program

Reconnecting McDowell is looking for reliable and committed adults to volunteer as mentors for a group of Broader Horizons high school juniors from McDowell County. Mentors should be able to commit to a phone conversation at least once a month during the program year, be able to attend a lunch and service opportunity in January with their mentee, and be able to pass a background check. Broader Horizons provides students the opportunity to engage in a wide variety of educational and professional learning opportunities. As a mentor, you'll be a valuable and reliable touch point in students' lives. If you're interested or have questions, please email Julie Rubin at juliem.rubin@gmail.com or Debra Elmore at delmore@aftwv.org.

Let's Connect

Follow Reconnecting McDowell on social media to receive the latest updates and news. We share information on webinars, job-training opportunities and upcoming community events. We also highlight our partners and their work in McDowell County and the state.

Social Media

-  Follow us on Twitter: [@ReconnectMcD](https://twitter.com/ReconnectMcD)
-  Follow us on Instagram: [@ReconnectMcD](https://www.instagram.com/ReconnectMcD)
-  Like us on Facebook: [facebook.com/ReconnectMcD](https://www.facebook.com/ReconnectMcD)

For a list of Reconnecting McDowell partners, visit www.ReconnectingMcDowell.org/partners.

