

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 Makes Great Strides



Speakers and community residents take part in the ceremonial nail hammering.

Attendees gather at the Renaissance Village site.



Emily Hicks speaks at the Renaissance Village construction site.

The Reconnecting McDowell board and partners meeting on Sept. 9-10 began with a celebration of Renaissance Village’s construction progress. The project is one way Reconnecting McDowell is addressing the County’s teacher shortage. Renaissance Village will provide two floors of apartments and two floors of commercial space. The building began construction in early June 2019 and is expected to be completed in April 2020.

At the event, Emily Hicks, a McDowell County native and teacher spoke about the impact the building will have both on teachers, who will be able to live closer to the schools where they teach, and on the community. “I can see this building [being a catalyst and] bringing back parts of old town Welch. It’s not just another building; it’s another piece of our hope.” Hicks noted that “if teachers are closer, there can be more after-school programs, and there can be more people around

who want to spend time with our students.” Other speakers included American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten, United Mine Workers of America President Cecil Roberts, Reconnecting McDowell Board Chair Gayle Manchin, Interim Welch Mayor Harold McBride, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler, and Vice Chair of the McDowell County Board of Education Mike Callaway.

The late Reba Honaker’s family was in attendance at the event. As mayor of Welch, Honaker was a tireless advocate for McDowell County and a strong supporter of Renaissance Village. Her memory and work were lauded at the event as one reason the building was made possible.

Planning the Future

A meeting of the board of directors immediately followed at the Phoenix Center. Board members, who were fired up by the progress and excitement of the Renaissance Village event, discussed ways in which the building can be utilized to catapult progress in other areas of Reconnecting McDowell’s work.

The partners meeting, held Sept. 10 at the Tamarack in Beckley, provided an opportunity for partners to strategize for the next six months and engage in conversations around possible areas of collaboration. The Economic Development, Instruction and Wraparound Services subcommittees all created work plans that can be viewed on the Reconnecting McDowell [website](http://www.ReconnectingMcDowell.org).

Reconnecting McDowell Partners

- AFL-CIO Housing Trust
- AFT-West Virginia
- Alliance for Economic Development in Southern West Virginia
- American Federation of Teachers
- Appalachian Regional Commission
- Ashland Resort
- AT&T
- Benedum Foundation
- Big Creek People in Action
- Bluefield State College
- BlueGreen Alliance Inc.
- Bowles Rice McDavid Graff & Love, LLP
- BridgeValley Community & Technical College
- Building America Community Development Enterprise
- Camilla Mountain
- Catholic Charities West Virginia
- The Center for Rural Health Development
- Children's Home Society of West Virginia
- Christian Community Development Association
- Cisco Systems Inc.
- City of Welch, West Virginia
- Coalfield Development Corporation
- Coalition for Community Schools
- Communications Workers of America
- Concord University
- Council of the Southern Mountains
- CoWorks
- Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
- Education Alliance
- Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia
- Eva's House Bed and Breakfast
- Families Leading Change
- Facing Hunger
- First Book
- Frontier Communications
- Gayle Manchin
- Greyhound Sports
- Harold McBride, Mayor of Welch
- Hatfield & McCoy Trail System
- Highmark West Virginia Inc.
- Hon. Clif Moore
- Human Resource Development & Employment, Inc.
- Human Resource Development Foundation, Inc.
- Jack Caffrey Arts and Culture Center
- Joe Ford, Mayor of Iaeger
- Marshall University
- Marshall University's June Harless Center for Rural Educational Research & Development
- McArts Gallery of Fine Arts
- McDowell Chamber of Commerce
- McDowell County Board of Education
- McDowell County Commission
- McDowell County Commission on Aging
- McDowell County Convention and Visitors Bureau
- McDowell County Department of Health and Human Resources
- McDowell County Economic Development Authority
- McDowell County FACES
- McDowell County Juvenile Drug Court
- McDowell County Redevelopment Authority
- McDowell County Sheriff's Office
- McDowell Methodist Association
- Mountaineer ChalleNGe Academy
- Mountaineer Food Bank
- Mountwest Community and Technical College
- National Coal Heritage Area Authority
- New River Community and Technical College
- Ohio-West Virginia YLA
- OneVoice Inc.
- Our Children, Our Future
- Pioneer Community Bank
- Project AWARE
- ReclaimWV
- Robert C. Byrd Center for Rural Health
- Robert C. Byrd Institute
- Save the Children – U.S. Programs
- SEIU 1199
- Senator Joe Manchin
- Shentel Communications
- Soil Conservation District/Solid Waste Authority
- South Central AFL-CIO
- Southern Highlands Community Mental Health Center
- Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College
- Tug River Health Association
- United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Local 400
- United Mine Workers of America
- United Way of Central West Virginia
- United Way of Southern West Virginia
- Volunteer West Virginia
- West Virginia AFL-CIO
- West Virginia Association of Student Councils
- West Virginia Brownfields Assistance Center
- West Virginia Bureau of Behavioral Health and Health Facilities
- West Virginia Coding Club
- West Virginia Department of Agriculture
- West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources
- West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition
- West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine
- West Virginia State University
- West Virginia University Institute of Technology
- West Virginia University School of Public Health
- Work of Heart Ministries
- WV FREE
- WV Healthy Kids and Families Coalition
- WVU Extension



To view the list online, visit www.ReconnectingMcDowell.org/partners.

CHILD IDENTIFICATION KITS AVAILABLE

The National Child Identification Program is an initiative that allows parents and guardians to collect personal identifying information about their children that can be used in the unfortunate instance that their child goes missing. The kit includes an ID card on which to record physical characteristics and attach a recent picture; an inkless fingerprint towelette is also provided for recording fingerprints on the ID card. Once completed, this card remains in the possession of the guardian.

The American Federation of Teachers partnered with the National Child Identification Program and has free kits available. For more information or to receive a kit, text Debra Elmore at 304-552-5766.

GRANTS AWARDED

- Reconnecting McDowell secured a \$50,000 AmeriCorps planning grant, which will provide support to plan an AmeriCorps program that will connect local schools and communities to resident-led economic development initiatives.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture awarded a \$100,000 Farm to School Grant to Reconnecting McDowell. The grant will support a countywide farm-to-school coordinator position to provide consulting support to Reconnecting McDowell and work closely with the County nutrition director. The coordinator will work to create an infrastructure plan for the sale of produce from local school agricultural sites to the McDowell County board of education's food service system.

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)

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).

