



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 8, 2020

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## **Belcher and Moore of NRGRDA to Present Dec. 16**

### **At ARC POWER Grantee Virtual Workshop**

Beckley, W.Va. (Dec. 8, 2020) – Jina Belcher and Judy Moore of the New River Gorge Regional Development Authority (NRGRDA), are lending their economic development experience to the annual WV POWER Grantee Summit being held virtually from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Dec. 16. The Summit is hosted by the WV Community Development Hub with support from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation.

Belcher, executive director of NRGRDA, will be moderating a panel at 1:05 p.m. on “Federal Partners: Program Updates and Opportunities,” while Judy Moore, director of the West Virginia Hive Network, will be a panelist at 11:10 a.m. talking about “Strategic Partnerships and Long-Term Sustainability to Weather Challenging Times.”

Registration is open to the public. West Virginians who might benefit from the sessions on community and economic development best practices, including a focus on applying for and successfully executing federal grants, are encouraged to attend.

ARC announced the 2020 grantees for their POWER funding initiative in October, awarding \$5.8 million to seven projects throughout West Virginia. The NRGRDA and WV Hive, as a partner, both secured grants in this latest funding round. Congress has not finalized the FY 2021 appropriations yet, but it is anticipated as much as \$50 million would be available in 2021 for ARC POWER grants in Appalachia’s 13 states.

Synopsis of the two NRGRDA grants benefitting the region are:

**Aero-Ready in Southern WV Grantee:** New River Gorge Regional Development \$50,000 to the New River Gorge Regional Development Authority in Beckley, WV, for Aero-Ready in Southern WV. This project will craft a strategic plan, including cost analysis, to create and implement a workforce training and education curriculum to support the aerospace industry in southern West Virginia. It will identify gaps in the existing aerospace programming currently serving West Virginia, work with the Federal Aviation Administration, and present an implementation plan for a workforce training and degree curriculum between New River Community and Technical College and WVU Tech.

**Creating Communities of Healings by Cultivating Businesses to Address the Opioid Crisis Grantee:** Region 4 Planning and Development Council Award \$1,499,894 to the Region 4 Planning and Development Council in Summersville, WV for Creating Communities of Healings by Cultivating Businesses to Address the Opioid Crisis. The Region 4 Planning and Development Council—in partnership with Seed Sower, Inc., Fruits of Labor, Wright Venture Services, the **WV Hive**, and Workforce WV Region 1—will create a program that strengthens the recovery-to-work ecosystem in southern West Virginia through the growth of social entrepreneurship in the food sector. This work will encourage businesses to meet the needs of communities coping with the opioid crisis by creating a “social impact hub” that offers cohort-based training for food-based businesses and entrepreneurs seeking to invest in the social mission of recovery. The cultivation of businesses and entrepreneurs to address the opioid crisis in Appalachia is a key component in improving the response to substance use disorder. The project takes advantage of entrepreneurship resources supported by a prior POWER grant to the WV Hive. As a result of the project, 75 businesses, 30 workers/trainees, and 150 participants will be served; 30 businesses, 20 workers/trainees, and 100 participants will be improved; nine jobs will be created; and \$500,000 in private investment will be leveraged.

More details about the WV POWER Grantee Summit and how to register can be found at <https://bit.ly/wvpowersummit>

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