



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New River Gorge Regional Development Authority's Jina Belcher

Selected as 2021 Wonder Woman, Keynote Speaker by WV Living Magazine

Belcher and Her Mother are First-Ever Mother-Daughter Recipients

Beckley, W.Va. (Sept. 14, 2021) – Jina Belcher, executive director of the New River Gorge Regional Development Authority (NRGRDA), is being honored as a 2021 Wonder Woman by *West Virginia Living Magazine* and will be the keynote speaker at the awards luncheon being held Sept. 28 in South Charleston.

Belcher's mother, Linda McKinney of Welch, was recognized as a Wonder Woman in 2015. McKinney is the Director of Five Loaves and Two Fishes Foodbank. McKinney and Belcher are the first mother-daughter West Virginia Wonder Woman awardees.

This is the 8th year WV Living has recognized 50 amazing women "who are raising the bar in their communities, serving as beacons of light in their industries, and forcing change for the greater good." According to the magazine, "We celebrate these Appalachian mavens proving that in a time full of uncertainty, love for one another is all we really need. No need for bulletproof bracelets or a golden lasso of truth—these women are creating a better West Virginia with their can-do attitudes and Mountain State spirit."

Belcher was also recognized in mid-June as a 2021 Generation Next '40 Under 40' recipient by the WV News and The State Journal for "making a difference in their business and communities." After starting her own business at 16 years of age, Belcher was the first high school junior to ever receive the McKelvey Foundation Entrepreneurial Scholarship. After graduating from Concord University in 2009

with a B.S. in Recreation and Tourism Management with an emphasis in Event Planning and Promotions, Belcher returned to Welch to assist her family in expanding the only non-profit food pantry in McDowell County. While there, she served as Trust Systems Administrator for seven years at MCNB Bank and Trust Company.

In 2016, Belcher joined the Coalfield Development Corporation. As Chief Business Officer, Belcher worked closely with those in government, the private sector and entrepreneurs to strengthen social enterprises across Appalachia. While there, Belcher's work in capital access and small business development organically crossed paths with NRGRDA.

In February 2019, Belcher became NRGRDA's Director of Business Development and later transitioned into the role of Deputy Director in early 2020. Combining her previous community development skills with her background in finance and social enterprise allowed NRGRDA to provide the New River Gorge region with resources and expertise needed to grow the thriving economy of Southern West Virginia. On October 19, the NRGRDA board named Belcher interim Executive Director to take the reins of the organization effective December 2020. She and her husband, J.D., and daughter Norah reside in Beckley.

More details on the WV Living 2021 Wonder Women Recognition Luncheon can be found at <https://wvliving.com/wwevent>

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About New River Gorge Regional Development Authority: The New River Gorge Regional Development Authority's (NRGRDA) mission is to initiate, facilitate and support the economic and community development efforts within the counties of Fayette, Nicholas, Raleigh, and Summers located in this region of southern West Virginia. NRGRDA stimulates the regional economy through business expansion and retention efforts, including an extensive portfolio of financial services; the management of sites for new companies locating to our region; and serving as a point of access for local service providers which offer a variety of technical assistance for business owners.

The West Virginia Hive is the entrepreneurship program of the NRGRDA and the administrator of the Country Roads Angel Network (CRAN). CRAN serves all 55 counties of the Mountain State, offering emerging businesses early stage, seed funding to bring their creations to market.

The Hive has served 331 businesses and helped launch 44 businesses in its 12-county service area. It is currently assisting 74 clients with business advising and technical assistance support on business modeling, financing, human resources, marketing, and other services.