



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NRGRDA's Allison Smith Presenting May 18

At Mountain State Land Use Academy at Pipestem

Beckley, W.Va. (May 12, 2022) – Allison Smith, Grants and Impact Manager at New River Gorge Regional Development Authority (NRGRDA), is presenting May 18 at the Mountain State Land Use Academy being held at Pipestem State Park.

Smith will be joined by Terrell Ellis, Executive Director of Advantage Valley, and West Virginia University College of Media Professor Rita Colistra, who is the founder and director of BrandJRN. Their breakout session, "Power of Storytelling," will offer insights on effective communication as essential for local government success. Panelists have expertise communicating with various local government audiences including out-of-state tourists, existing businesses, and funders such as federal agencies and foundations. The session will explore strategies to recognize a community's assets, identify the audience, and develop a story. In addition to learning about specific effective communication skills, attendees will learn about success stories in West Virginia related to business retention, attracting tourism, and main street redevelopment.

The Mountain State Land Use Academy is hosted by the Land Use and Sustainable Development Law Clinic. The statewide conference is being held May 17-18 and will focus on resilient communities, with plenary sessions on planning for the apocalypse, rural housing, and food and drink tourism complete with local tastings. The conference attracts local, state, and federal government officials, land use planners, members of local planning bodies, and others interested in land use planning.

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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). More can be found at <https://nrgrda.org/>