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Southern Community Network Meeting at Tamarack Feb. 23 Kicks Off Project Development for Federal Rural Partnership Network Support

Beckley, W.Va. (Feb. 22, 2023) – Thursday’s first in-person meeting of the Southern West Virginia Community Network at Tamarack will feature 150 representatives of local and regional government leaders focused on discussing and developing infrastructure, economic, workforce, and housing development projects in 12 southern rural communities with support and guidance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Stephanie Tyree, Executive Director of the West Virginia Community Development Hub invites media to attend and said Thursday’s session from noon to 4 p.m. is focused on learning from subject matter stakeholders about critical economic challenges across Southern WV and discussing collaborative strategies to solve those challenges. “The slate of stakeholders on the agenda will support the Rural Partners Network in our identification of potential priorities that we can collectively focus on supporting and helping solve,” said Tyree.

The Southern West Virginia Community Network was selected in November 2022 as one of 22 rural regions nationwide to take part in the Rural Partners Network (RPN). RPN is an all-of-government program that partners with rural communities to help them access resources and

funding to create local jobs, build infrastructure, and support long-term economic stability on their own terms. As an RPN Community Network, the regional network will receive on-the-ground, full-time support from federal staff assigned to provide technical assistance tailored to the communities' unique needs and priorities. These staff members will be people who live and work in the rural communities they serve, allowing them to develop partnerships with local leaders to promote growth and prosperity for rural families and local communities. The full agenda can be found [here](#).

The New River Gorge Regional Development Authority (NRGRDA) is one of several Founding Partners on the Steering Committee of the Southern Community Network, led by the West Virginia Community Development HUB. Others include:

- Region 1 Planning and Development Council
- Region 2 Planning and Development Council
- Region 4 Planning and Development Council
- Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation
- Mingo County Redevelopment Authority
- New River Gorge Regional Development Authority
- Wyoming County Economic Development Authority
- Logan County Economic Development Authority
- Bluefield Economic Development Authority
- Coalfield Development
- Alliance for Economic Development for Southern West Virginia
- City of Gilbert
- Williamson Board of Parks and Recreation
- Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Corporation
- Alliance for Economic Development for Southern West Virginia
- Williamson Housing Authority
- West Virginia State University

Twenty counties in West Virginia were designated by USDA for inclusion in the Rural Partner Network. The West Virginia Pioneer Community Network coordinated by Glenville State University includes the following counties: Braxton, Calhoun, Clay, Gilmer, Nicholas, Roane, Webster, and Wirt.

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