

CELEBRATING OUR 2024

REGIONAL IMPACT

A Year of Progress Across New River Gorge Regional
Development Authority's Strategic Priorities



CATALYSTS FOR REGIONAL IMPACT

The New River Gorge Regional Development Authority (NRGRDA) breaks the mold of traditional economic development authorities by operating within a collaborative ecosystem of supporting programs to initiate, facilitate, and support local communities and economic growth. The WV Hive plays a pivotal role by connecting entrepreneurs in Southern West Virginia with essential tools for success, including business advising, technical assistance, access to a Makerspace, and a comprehensive statewide network of resources.



Business Attraction

Using [ChooseNRG.com](https://www.choosenrg.com), our site selection tool, businesses are provided real-time data and insights to identify prime locations for growth and investment in the New River Gorge region. Coupled with proactive business attraction efforts, NRGRDA is streamlining the site selection process, connecting companies with strategic opportunities, and positioning the region as a competitive destination for industry expansion.



Business Retention and Expansion

Through targeted support and resources, NRGRDA is committed to retaining existing businesses and facilitating their growth. By addressing the specific needs of local companies, we ensure long-term economic stability and job creation within the region.



Small Business and Entrepreneurship

The NRGRDA, through its entrepreneurship program WV Hive, empowers small businesses and entrepreneurs by providing essential tools such as business advising and technical assistance. This support helps foster innovation and entrepreneurship, driving regional economic development in Southern West Virginia.

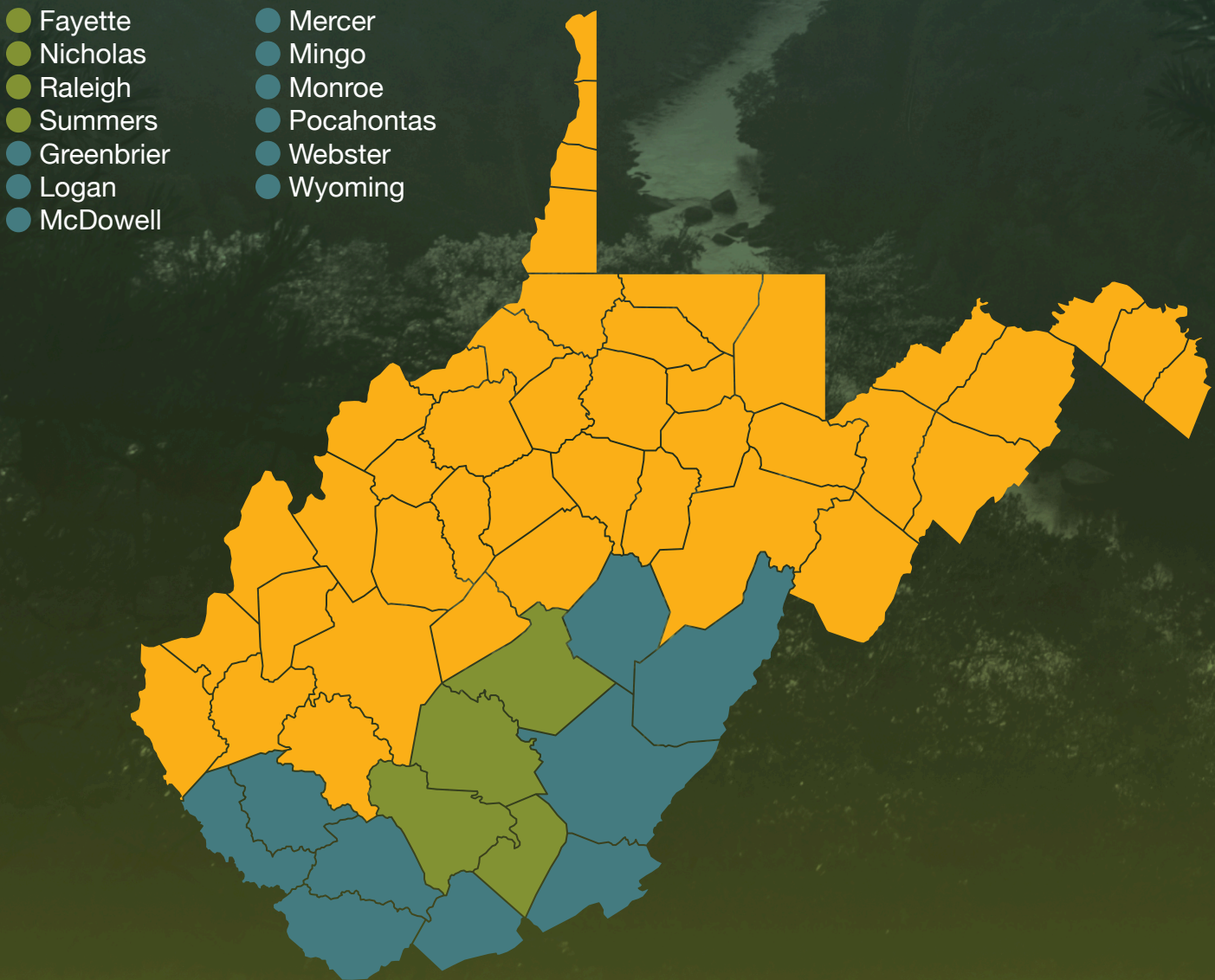


Quality of Place

Enhancing the quality of place is a key focus for NRGRDA, as we work to create vibrant and strong communities. By improving infrastructure, promoting cultural initiatives, and enhancing recreational opportunities, we aim to make the region an attractive and thriving place to live and work.

OUR COLLECTIVE REGION

The New River Gorge region and Southern West Virginia hold significant importance due to their unique blend of natural beauty, economic potential, and cultural heritage. Our collective region is comprised of thirteen counties. Serving this area not only supports the growth of vibrant industries, such as tourism, manufacturing, and agribusiness, but also strengthens community bonds through infrastructural development and job creation. Our continued efforts ensure the region remains a dynamic hub for innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic development.





Jina Belcher
Executive Director



Judy Moore
NRGRDA Deputy Director and
WV Hive Executive Director



Amy Showalter
Community Asset Assistance
Department Lead



Mary Legg
Business Capacity Services
Department Lead and
Senior Business Advisor



Andy Davis
Manager of Gateway
Community Initiatives



Beth Epperson
Contracts and
Procurement Specialist



Devon Fitzgerald
Regional Business Advisor



Leah Hurley
Finance Compliance Manager



Laura Messer
Attraction and Marketing
Coordinator



Hannah Morgan
Program Coordinator



Matt Nichols
Regional Business Advisor



Crystal Silver
Finance Compliance
Coordinator



Diana Woods
Collegiate Project Manager for
Entrepreneurship Expansion



Business Attraction

The NRGRDA has made significant strides in attracting investments to the region by proactively identifying opportunities and providing businesses with the tools they need to succeed. Through ChooseNRG.com, our site selection tool, we streamline the process for companies seeking prime locations, ensuring they have access to critical data and resources for informed decision-making. By acquiring key properties for productive reuse, we have unlocked new development opportunities, fueling business growth and revitalization. This strategic approach has led to job creation, strengthened the local economy, and enhanced community prosperity. Additionally, securing vital infrastructure investments has laid the foundation for sustained business attraction and long-term regional success.

Attracting Investments to the Region

\$23,781,896 in investments committed

- Federal - **\$15,895,110**
- State - **\$5,986,786**
- Local - **\$1,900,000**

99 active property listings on ChooseNRG.com

141 site-ready acres developed to target business recruitment

12 prospects generated via ChooseNRG.com

Property Acquired for Productive Reuse

950 acres of property acquired for proactive redevelopment planning

1 building acquired for focused productive reuse

Infrastructure Investment Secured

\$2,600,000 committed to critical infrastructure development for site ready property

Jobs Created

75 manufacturing jobs created



Success in Attracting Investments to the Region: Pioneering Site Readiness to Drive Economic Growth

The Raleigh County Memorial Airport (RCMA) has become a proven model for site readiness and business attraction, thanks to NRGDA's leadership in developing a strategic site readiness approach. Recognizing the airport's potential as a hub for aerospace, logistics, and industrial development, NRGDA spearheaded efforts to prepare the site for investment by securing funding, advancing engineering and infrastructure improvements, and aligning key public and private partners.

This initiative was part of NRGDA's broader "Site Ready" program, a proactive strategy to identify, prepare, and market industrial sites that could accelerate business expansion and job creation. The success of this approach at RCMA demonstrated how removing development barriers and ensuring shovel-ready status could significantly increase the attractiveness of sites for new investment.

The effectiveness of NRGDA's Site Ready initiative gained statewide recognition, ultimately influencing the State of West Virginia to adopt a similar strategy focused on investing in and promoting ready-to-develop industrial sites. By proving this concept, NRGDA has positioned Southern West Virginia as a leader in site readiness, ensuring the region remains competitive for large-scale industrial growth and economic diversification.



Success in Property Acquired for Productive Reuse: PATTERN Training and Manufacturing Center



The PATTERN: Planning and Accelerating Textile Technology and Entrepreneurship Regional Network Training and Manufacturing Center is dedicated to leveraging West Virginia's expertise in the outdoor industry, heritage, and craftsmanship to foster and expand textile manufacturing opportunities in Southern West Virginia.



The establishment of the New River Gorge National Park and Preserve has resulted in a boost in visitors from all over, leading to great potential to fill voids in the outdoor textiles prototyping industry here in West Virginia. As a leader on the Appropriations Committee, I was proud to advocate for the support needed to establish this lab in southern West Virginia, and it was great to see the progress firsthand in-person. This type of collaboration is critical to moving our state forward and strengthening our business climate, and I can't wait to see what it does for local businesses when it is fully up and running. – **U.S. Senator Shelley Moore Capito**



Success in Infrastructure Investment Secured: Pinecrest Business and Technology Park



NRGRDA secured \$1.4 million in funding to advance infrastructure improvements at Pinecrest Business and Technology Park. This investment will enhance infrastructure networks within the park, ensuring greater accessibility for businesses and visitors alike. By improving roadways, utilities, and connectivity, Pinecrest is being positioned as a prime location for innovation and job creation. These enhancements will attract new industries, facilitate business expansion, and strengthen the region's economic resilience. The investment also supports long-term growth by providing the necessary infrastructure to accommodate future development opportunities.

University Drive Infrastructure Project



In addition to the Pinecrest project, NRGRDA has secured \$1.2 million for the University Drive site development. This funding will enhance a 44 acre site in a key commercial corridor. The upgrades will include earth moving, roadway development, utility expansion, and final site development. By modernizing this critical corridor, NRGRDA is fostering a more accessible and business-friendly environment that will drive economic growth, attract investors, and improve quality of life in the surrounding communities.



Business Retention and Expansion

The collaborative efforts of the NRGRDA and the WV Hive have culminated in remarkable achievements over the past year. Through our dedication to business retention and expansion, significant capital investments have been made by local businesses, driving economic growth across the New River Gorge region. By forging strategic partnerships, we have ensured that technical assistance is readily available through various partner programs, providing businesses with the essential support needed for success.

Moreover, a diverse array of vendors have been engaged for numerous projects, strengthening the local supply chain and enhancing community involvement. These collective initiatives have played a pivotal role in retaining numerous jobs, highlighting our unwavering commitment to maintaining the economic vitality of the region.

Capital Invested by Businesses

\$43,000,000 invested by new businesses in the region

Technical Assistance Committed by Partner Programs

\$98,712.50 in technical assistance support for project advancement

Vendors Procured for Projects

8 new vendors engaged for NRGRDA project support

Jobs Retained

161 local jobs retained through expansion projects



Success in Capital Invested by Businesses: NRGRDA's Role in Klöckner Pentaplast Expansion in Beaver, WV

When Klöckner Pentaplast (KPa), a global leader in sustainable packaging solutions, sought to expand its operations in Beaver, WV, it faced the complex challenge of assembling a capital structure that would support infrastructure improvements, equipment upgrades, and workforce growth. NRGRDA, with partners from Huntington Public Capital and Bowles Rice LLP, played a pivotal role in aligning an innovative financial solution to make this expansion a reality.

Through strategic collaboration, KPa accessed \$19M in bond financing issued by NRGRDA to advance their expansion plans into reality. This effort ensured that the project had the financial backing required to enhance production capacity, create high-quality jobs, and strengthen KPa's long-term presence in Southern West Virginia.

Beyond financial structuring, NRGRDA facilitated engagement with state and local leaders to streamline the project's development, providing technical assistance and site development support. The expansion not only reinforced KPa's commitment to sustainable manufacturing but also delivered significant economic benefits to the New River Gorge region, further cementing it as a hub for industrial growth.

Today, Klöckner Pentaplast's Beaver facility stands as a testament to the power of strategic collaboration, showcasing how targeted capital investment can fuel economic resilience and drive industrial success in West Virginia.



Success in Technical Assistance Committed by Partner Programs: Hinton Ice House



Technical assistance committed by the WV Department of Environmental Protection reinvigorated the Hinton Ice House redevelopment project supporting Lead-Based Paint, Mold, Radon Inspections (\$6,072.50), Asbestos Abatement - (\$37,690) and site reuse planning (\$29,950), for a total of \$73,712.50. Technical Assistance provided by partner programs is essential to redeveloping community spaces for productive reuse that supports economic development opportunities.

Press Release: <https://nrgrda.org/nrgrda-names-bowles-rice-llp-and-huntington-national-bank-2024-partners-of-the-year-at-december-6-nrgrda-showcase-and-soiree/>



Success in Vendors Procured for Projects: Dedicated Vendors

Engaging our vendors in NRGRDA projects is vital for collaborative innovation, resource efficiency, and regional economic growth. Their expertise ensures timely project execution, strengthens local supply chains, and further builds upon our economic ecosystem.

THRASHER

E.L. ROBINSON
ENGINEERING

Huntington

Bowles Rice

Greenbrier
Environmental
Group, Inc.

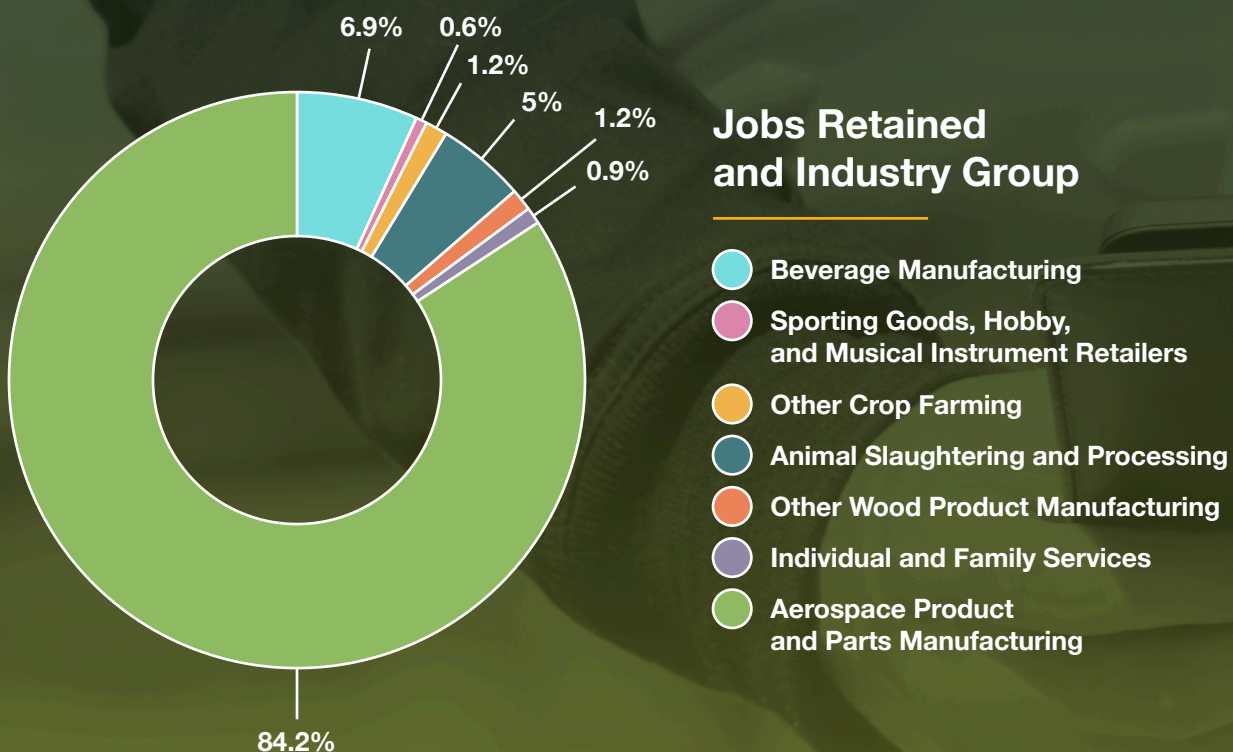
UNITED
BANK

and more...



Success in Jobs Retained: SMR Technologies and WV Hive Supported Businesses/Entrepreneurs

Retaining jobs within the SMR Technologies manufacturing sector and WV Hive supported businesses/entrepreneurs is crucial for local economic stability and community growth. By maintaining these 136 and 22 positions respectively, we not only secure livelihoods, but also preserve the skilled workforce necessary for continued innovation and competitiveness.





Small Business and Entrepreneurship

The combined efforts of the NRGRDA and the WV Hive have been instrumental in nurturing small business growth throughout the New River Gorge region and Southern West Virginia. By delivering comprehensive technical assistance, we ensure that entrepreneurs have the necessary resources to overcome challenges and capitalize on opportunities. Through a diverse array of support programs, entrepreneurs gain crucial access to tools and guidance to propel their ventures forward. Furthermore, an insightful analysis of the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) breakdown of WV Hive clients offers a detailed perspective on the diverse industries flourishing under their collective support.

Fostering Small Business Growth

166 entrepreneurs or small businesses served

13 small businesses created

Retail opportunities secured for **17** entrepreneurs

Technical Assistance Deployed to Small Businesses

\$167,271.27 in technical assistance deployed

Support Programs Accessed by Entrepreneurs

37 trainings provided for **396** training participants



Success in Fostering Small Business Growth: Mountain Table and New River Farms Sawmill



For the first time, in 2024 the award committee selected two businesses for the WV Hive Startup of the Year, with a tied score. Nadine Sonnevile and Alexander Durand have developed a standout farm-to-table business in Renick redefining community dining with locally sourced ingredients, craft beverages, and a rotating supper menu that celebrates diversity and local talent. Mountain Table's commitment to sustainability, from supporting over 30 local suppliers to launching rural recycling initiatives, truly sets them apart.

Blog Post: <https://wvhive.com/2024/12/2024-hive-award-recipients/>

Jack and Kathleen Taggart are revolutionizing the local lumber supply chain with their dedication to sustainability, supporting local loggers, landowners, and contractors. New River Farms Sawmill's innovative approach not only keeps resources within the community but also reduces environmental impact.

Blog Post: <https://wvhive.com/2024/12/2024-hive-award-recipients/>



Success in Technical Assistance Deployed to Small Businesses: Digital Transformation of Greenbrier Valley Brewing Company

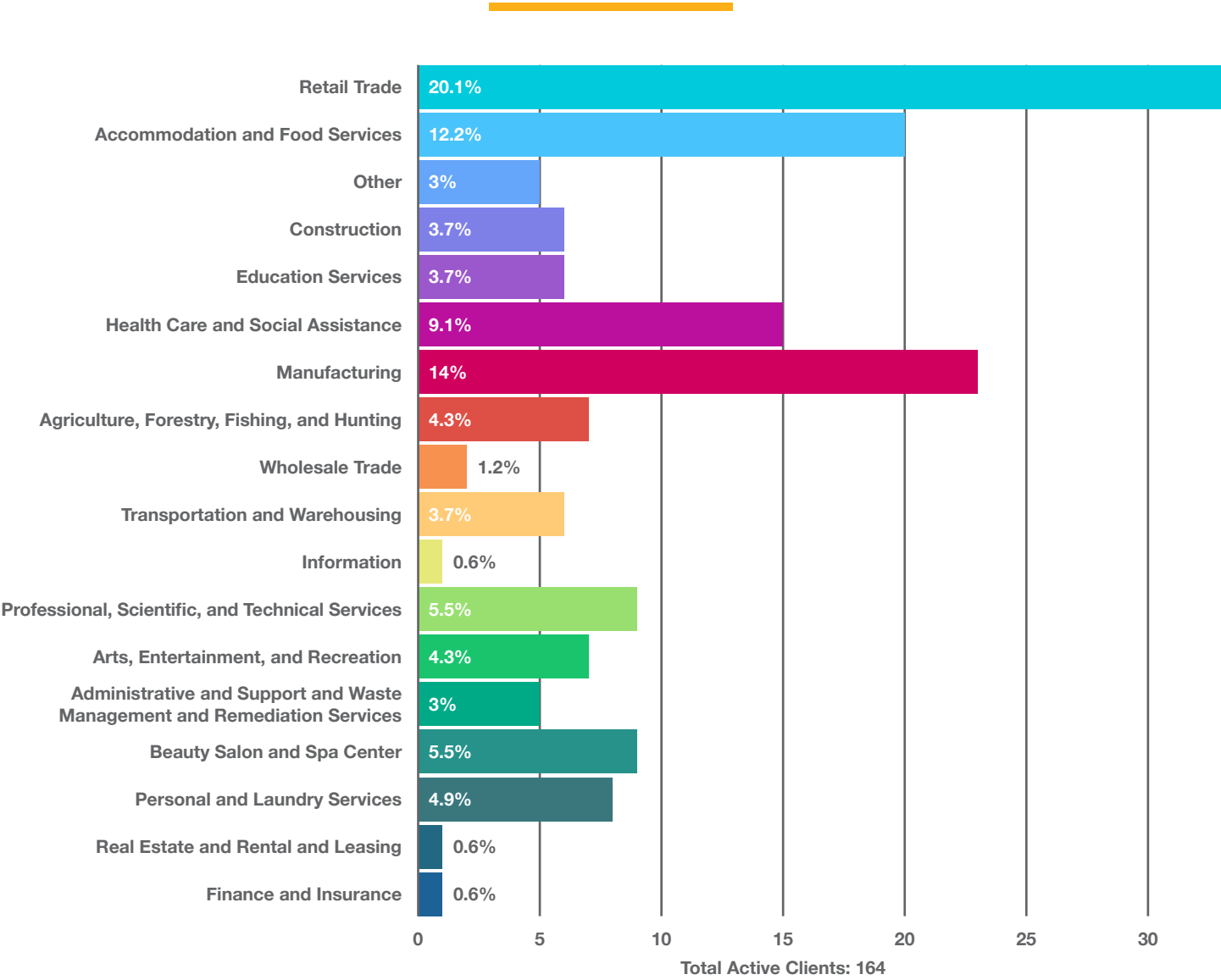
Greenbrier Valley Brewing Company (GVBC) underwent a digital transformation in February 2024, enhancing its online presence and marketing strategy with technical assistance from Up & Running Design Co and Allegheny Image Factory.

- **Website Development:** Up & Running Design Co. created a user-friendly website (gvbc.beer) with nine core pages, custom branding, SEO best practices, and mobile responsiveness.
- **Video Marketing:** Allegheny Image Factory produced high-impact video content over two days, including promotions for flagship brands and a feature with Homer Hickam, tailored for various platforms to boost engagement.

These efforts improved GVBC's connection to its audience and market presence, demonstrating the value of strategic technical assistance in a competitive environment.

WV HIVE INDUSTRY SUPPORT

The following chart breaks down WV Hive small business support using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). The NAICS code plays a crucial role in monitoring business growth and retention in Southern West Virginia. This system provides a standardized framework that enables businesses, government entities, and researchers to consistently classify and analyze economic activities across various sectors. WV Hive supports small businesses across multiple industries.



North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)

Key Benefits of NAICS Codes: NAICS codes provide a standardized framework that enables precise data collection and economic analysis, crucial for understanding the dynamics of Southern West Virginia's economy. They support policy development, attract investment by offering a clear economic landscape, and allow businesses to benchmark their performance, ultimately fostering growth in the region.



Success in Support Programs Accessed by Entrepreneurs: Multiple Training Opportunities with CO.STARTERS



Erica Bowden is the owner of Auntie E's, a custom-order bakery operating out of a home-based commercial kitchen in Raleigh County, WV. After feeling overwhelmed running her bakery, she joined CO.STARTERS Core, one of three CO.STARTERS programs regularly offered by WV Hive, and found the guidance she needed. Erica shares that participating in CO.STARTERS gave her a business understanding foundation, a guidebook, and the confidence to introduce herself as a business owner. The lessons on liability insurance, financial modeling, and discovering the bottom line were game changers. Since completing the program, her customer base has grown, she has expanded her social media presence, and she has won multiple awards, including WV Hive's 2024 Survivor Bee. Her advice to you:



This will be the wisest investment you make for your business and yourself. Don't sleep on this! You don't know what door it will help you open. – **Erica Bowden**

Specialized Training Opportunity with ZingTrain



Since the National Park Service designation of The New River Gorge National Park and Preserve in December 2020, the NRG counties and neighboring counties are experiencing an acceleration in the hospitality industries. Responding to this growth and the corresponding business development needs, WV Hive collaborated with Zingerman's out of Ann Arbor, Michigan to develop a ZingTrain customer service and leadership strategies training applicable to local businesses, tailored to hospitality businesses. 47 training participants, including NRGRDA and WV Hive staff attended the two-day training March 25 and 26. Training participant feedback noted appreciation for perspectives from a variety of industries, and that the customer service training was applicable for new and experienced employees.



Fostering Business Resilience and Entrepreneurial Growth: ACT Now Coalition



WV Hive is partnering with The West Virginia Community Development Hub (The Hub), Advantage Valley, WV Brownfields Assistance Center, and AFV Educate, Inc. to increase business resilience in Accelerate Communities and deliver signature services in Logan and Mingo Counties as part of the Community and Business Resilience Initiative (CBRI), in partnership with the ACT Now Coalition.



Key successes include strengthened collaboration with The Hub's community coaches to enhance awareness of WV Hive and business resilience opportunities through the Accelerate Program. This led to a strategic conversation with the Princeton Accelerate team, resulting in plans for a Coffee Talks event and targeted recruitment of local businesses as WV Hive clients.

Logan and Mingo Counties were added to the WV Hive's service footprint in alignment with the CBRI partnership. Building on successful summer outreach, WV Hive hosted Community Days in multiple towns across both counties in late September and early October. Business advisors and staff connected with 23 businesses, shared resources, and promoted a Coffee Talks event in Williamson. Engagement with the Logan County Chamber of Commerce further expanded outreach. These efforts reinforced WV Hive's role in fostering business resilience and entrepreneurial growth in the region.



Quality of Place

The NRGRDA and WV Hive have greatly contributed to the New River Gorge region's success by enhancing its appeal and driving community development. New committees have been formed to support vibrant communities and improve local infrastructure, paving the way for growth. Initiatives have facilitated access to partner programs, encouraging engagement and support. Additionally, special project events promote cultural and recreational development, making the region more attractive for living and working.

Priorities Assessed

1. Wayfinding Assessment
2. Barriers to Capital Access
3. WV Child Care Economic Impact Survey
4. Housing Needs Assessment

New Committees Created and Communities Accessing Partner Programs

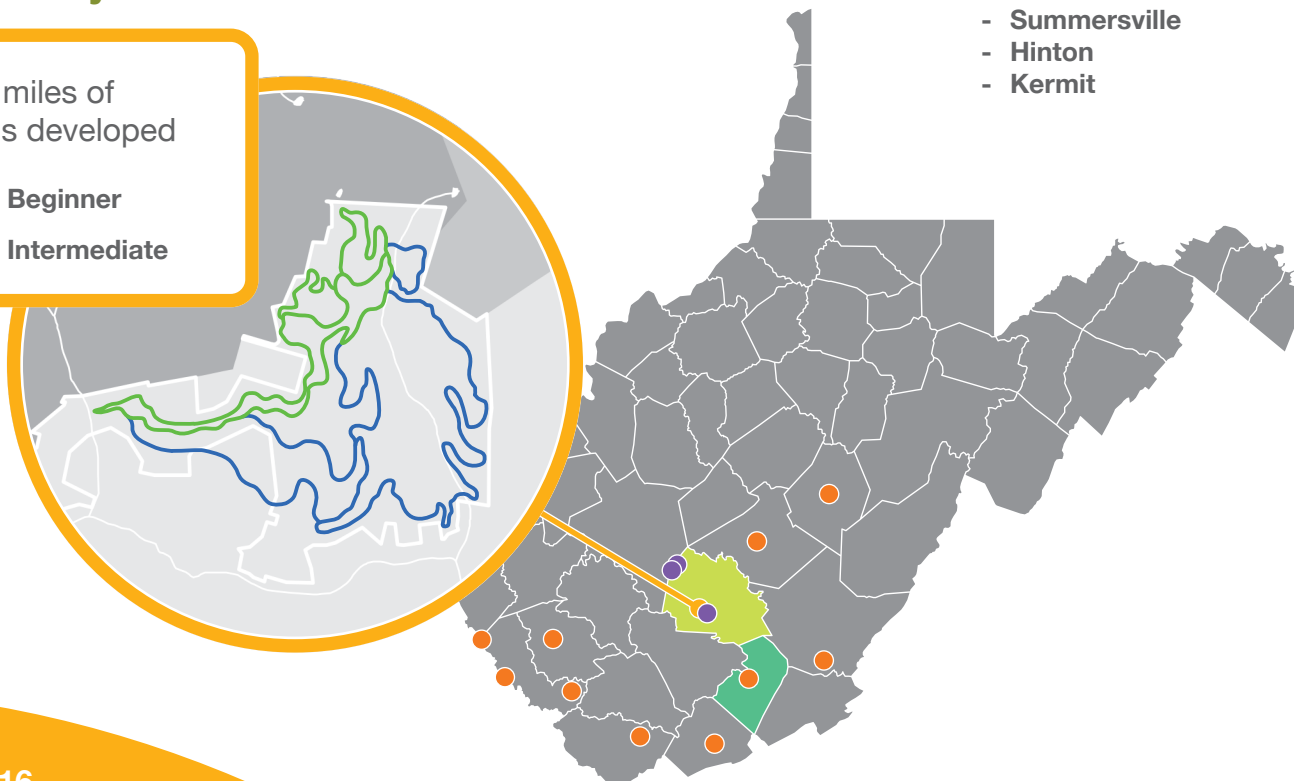
- Land Reuse Agency
- Action Committee
- HubCAP Communities:
 - Oak Hill
 - Smithers
 - Montgomery

- Accelerate WV Communities:
 - Princeton
 - Ronceverte
 - Webster County
 - Logan
 - Gilbert
 - Kimball
 - Williamson
 - Summersville
 - Hinton
 - Kermit

Needleseye Trails

6.5 miles of trails developed

- Beginner
- Intermediate





Success in Enhancing the Region's Appeal: Needleseye Trails



Needleseye Trails are complete, with an additional \$125,000 federal investment committed for the Trailhead. Along with expanded mountain biking opportunities just outside of the New River Gorge National Park, this project addressed a gap in local technical expertise with the selection of a vendor based in an area known for mountain biking, delivering high-quality development in area trails. Rock Solid Trail Contracting, based in Bentonville, Arkansas, built bike-optimized trails to inspire skills

progression, while also providing community exposure to the economic opportunity provided by the development of high-caliber recreational trails.



Success in New Committees Created: Land Reuse Agency, Action Committee, and NRG Working Group Subcommittees

- Fayette County piloted the first county Land Reuse Agency (LRA), utilizing a dilapidated building tool and committee expertise to identify and prioritize properties for productive reuse.
- Summers County and Hinton stakeholders joined NRGRDA staff for monthly calls, working as an Action Committee to move local economic development projects forward.
- NRG Working Group Education Subcommittee began collaboration with educational institutions and industry partners to align training programs with workforce needs, strengthen economic development through targeted education initiatives, and bridge the gap between higher education and industry workforce demands.
- NRG Working Group Wayfinding Subcommittee was formed around the development of a Regional Wayfinding and Branding Assessment, and applied for Technical Assistance Funds to further support this work.



Success in Turning Vacant Properties into Community Assets: NRGRDA and Fayette County Land Reuse Agency

The Fayette County Land Reuse Agency (FCLRA)—the first county-based Land Reuse Agency (LRA) in West Virginia—is setting a precedent for how distressed and underutilized properties can be strategically acquired and repurposed to support economic development, outdoor recreation, and community revitalization. In partnership with NRGRDA, FCLRA is taking a proactive approach to reclaiming blighted properties and putting them back into productive reuse in ways that enhance quality of place across the New River Gorge region.

Rather than allowing vacant properties to remain liabilities, FCLRA leverages West Virginia's land reuse laws to legally take ownership of abandoned and tax-delinquent properties, ensuring they are transferred to responsible owners who will contribute to the region's growth. These efforts help remove barriers to investment, making it easier for small businesses, entrepreneurs, and developers to bring new life to historic downtowns, former industrial sites, and residential communities.

Through this work, once-forgotten properties are now being converted into local business spaces, outdoor recreation amenities, and community-driven projects that strengthen the region's economy and improve the quality of life for residents. By reclaiming and repurposing these assets, NRGRDA and FCLRA are helping to ensure that Fayette County remains a thriving gateway to the New River Gorge, where economic opportunity and natural beauty go hand in hand.



Success in Communities Accessing Partner Programs: HubCAP and Accelerate WV

Strong partnerships allow NRGRDA and WV Hive to provide business and economic development support in alignment with partner programs engaging communities within our footprint. Communities participated in The West Virginia Community Development Hub's HubCAP and Accelerate WV programs doubled this year, with HubCAP communities (Oak Hill, Smithers, and Montgomery) and Accelerate WV communities (Princeton, Ronceverte, and Webster County), which run through 2025, being joined by a second cohort of Accelerate WV communities that will participate through 2026 (Logan, Gilbert, Kimball, Williamson, Summersville, Hinton, and Kermit).



Success in Special Events: Fayette County LRA Roundtable

NRGRDA co-hosted a Fayette County Reuse and Recreation Planning Session with the Fayette County Land Reuse Agency, which brought together community members interested in recreation development. Approximately 20 attendees shared input on the existing and planned recreation infrastructure throughout the county including trails, parks, and stream access points, to help inform the LRA's identification of nearby and adjacent properties which could be acquired to improve those outdoor recreation assets for the benefit of outdoor recreation user groups and associated businesses. The Land Reuse Agency is excited to move forward with prioritizing recreation assets to position abandoned and dilapidated properties for productive re-use for the benefit of Fayette County!

Food Business Incubation Hub Event



Leaders of the New River Gorge Regional Development Authority (NRGRDA) and WV Hive were joined by Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Federal Co-Chair Gayle Manchin and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development West Virginia State Director Ryan Thorn in August to announce a \$750,000 federal grant to the WV Hive that will locate a new Food Business Incubation Hub in Fayette County, through the Rural Community Advancement Program (RCAP), a joint program

between the Appalachian Regional Commission and USDA Rural Development. In addition to the announcement, the event showcased the many benefits of small business development throughout southern West Virginia to local community members and visiting Chilean rural business and community development leaders. The event also included a small business roundtable discussion with regional stakeholders at the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Building, and visits to Water Stone Outdoors in Fayetteville (Holly Fussell, owner) and Pinheads in Oak Hill (Alison Ibarra, owner), both businesses serve as anchors of their communities.



Success in Quality of Place Priorities Assessed:

- **Wayfinding Assessment** - A Wayfinding and Branding Assessment supported by the NRG Working Group was successfully completed by Downstream Strategies, paving the way for a comprehensive regional wayfinding system that enhances community and economic development by directing visitors to local attractions, supporting small businesses, and strengthening community connections in the Gateway Communities of New River Gorge National Park.
- **Barriers to Capital Access** - Through a planning grant from Truist CRA, the WV Hive conducted research via various networking events to better understand and substantiate the need to address barriers to capital access for small businesses. These barriers, including restrictive lending criteria, lack of financial literacy, and limited investor networks, hinder entrepreneurs' ability to start, sustain, and grow. Addressing these challenges is essential to fostering a thriving small business ecosystem and driving economic growth in the region. We are looking forward to providing focused support on removing barriers to capital access in 2025.
- **WV Child Care Economic Impact Survey** - Recognizing childcare as a critical factor that influences workforce participation and economic growth, the WV Childcare Economic Impact Survey was launched in the WV Association of Regional Councils. The goal of the survey is to show the impacts of childcare challenges on existing and prospective businesses within WV.



- **Housing Needs Assessment** - A regional Housing Needs Assessment was launched to support BUILD WV tax credit access and provide data to address community housing needs. This initiative aims to ensure that housing developments align with the specific demands of the community for improved quality of place for residents.

NEW INITIATIVES FOSTERED

Launching new initiatives in the New River Gorge region and Southern West Virginia is crucial for boosting economic development and revitalizing local communities. These initiatives, supported by strategic collaboration and leveraging of local resources, hold the potential to transform the region into a thriving economic hub.



PATTERN (Planning and Accelerating Textile Technology and Entrepreneurship Regional Network) aims to enhance the outdoor and manufacturing industry in the New River Gorge through a regional collaboration. It will utilize local assets, including WVU Tech students and skilled workers, to boost the textile manufacturing sector. Partnering with established organizations in West Virginia, North Carolina, and Michigan, the project will create a prepared workforce, invest in manufacturing resources, leverage local skills, and increase the region's capacity.

Congressional support has been instrumental in advancing our PATTERN textile training and manufacturing center and the NRG working group initiatives, providing critical funding and policy backing to turn vision into action. These initiatives exemplify how federal partnerships drive meaningful, lasting impact in Southern West Virginia.



The New River Gorge Regional Working Group (NRG Working Group) supports infrastructure project prioritization and implementation with a focus on sustainable development for the entire New River Gorge region. By aligning local projects with key infrastructure priorities, it ensures strategic investments in the region's future.

Infrastructure Improvement: Addressing essential infrastructure needs that are critical for economic growth.

Business Retention: Enhancing business retention by involving local businesses in the implementation of infrastructure improvement projects.

Regional Connectivity: Identifying and capitalizing on opportunities for enhancing regional connectivity through the project's implementation.



PATTERN

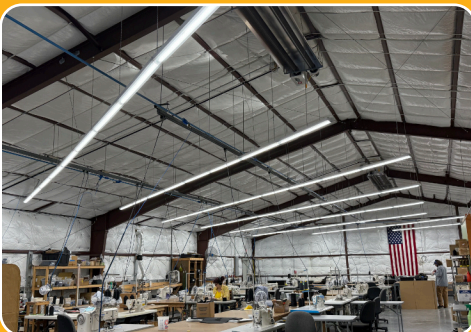
Accelerating Textile Technology



The PATTERN initiative aims to bolster the textile manufacturing industry in the New River Gorge region by leveraging West Virginia's rich heritage in the outdoor industry, craftsmanship, and its skilled workforce. This collaborative approach involves partnerships with industry experts from West Virginia, North Carolina, and Michigan.



A growing partnership with TSUGA allowed for further development of PATTERN's product prototyping support and training. Project team members and community partners visited TSUGA in Boone, North Carolina, to develop Phase 1 implementation and visioning around the prototyping process, and discuss TSUGA staff serving as host trainers for the outdoor gear train-the-trainer.



Spoiler Alert

Taylor Carnell

a seasoned textile professional,
hired as PATTERN Operations
Manager to begin work in
January 2025!

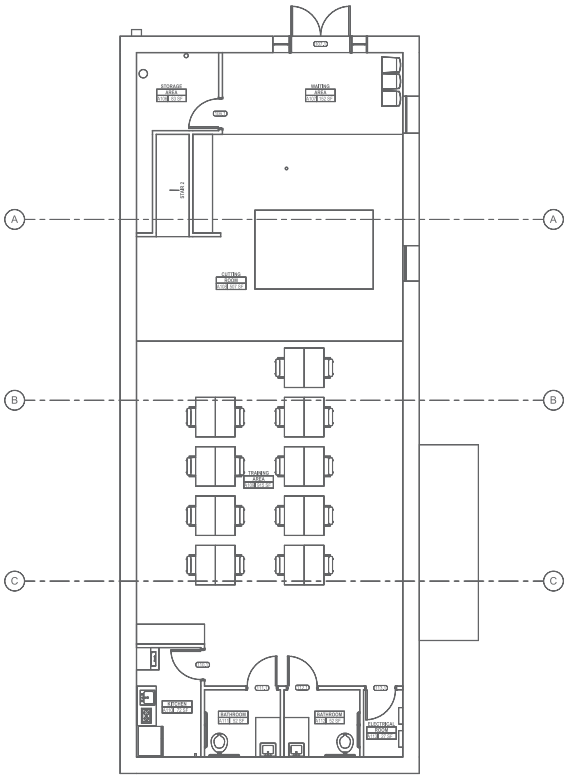
PATTERN Ribbon Cutting



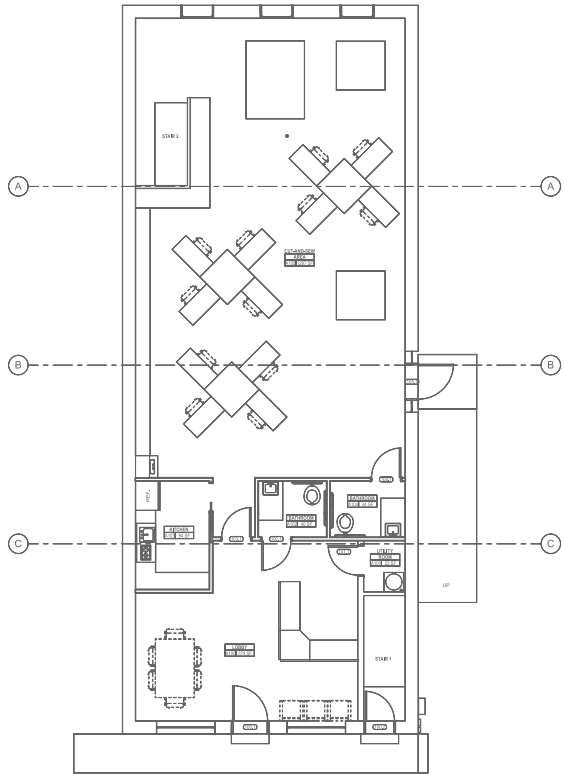
Senator Capito joined NRGRDA, WV Hive, and consultant, Emily Rouse, to cut the ribbon for the future PATTERN facility in November. Located at 412 City Avenue in Beckley, the future home of PATTERN has served many uses in the community, including manufacturing and retail, and NRGRDA is thrilled to support its productive reuse. This hub will serve as an epicenter for workforce training and development, equipped with a licensed 192-hour industrial sewing curriculum from the Industrial Sewing and Innovation Center (ISAI), aligning with industry standards, including a specialized outdoor-gear training component. The training program aims to cultivate a skilled workforce ready to meet industry demands by integrating the curriculum into community college networks across Southern West Virginia. The New River Gorge is anxious for a full opening of the PATTERN Facility in late summer 2025.

Press Release: <https://nrgrda.org/capito-praises-pattern/>

Industrial Sewing Training Center



Cut and Sew Manufacturing Center





The New River Gorge (NRG) Working Group is a pivotal initiative focused on infrastructure project prioritization and implementation within the New River Gorge region. Grounded in the principles of meaningful development, the group aims to cultivate projects at the local level, ensuring they align with identified infrastructure priorities such as utilities, public health, environmental impacts, and transportation. Members are committed to their roles, understanding that their active participation directly correlates to the success of the projects they support, thus fostering stronger community ties and economic growth throughout the region.

Subcommittees Highlight

The NRG Working Group operates through specialized subcommittees, leveraging expert knowledge and collaboration, to address specific regional needs. These subcommittees drive strategic planning and project execution.

A key initiative of The Higher Education and Workforce Development Subcommittee is the ARISE Planning Grant Concept, developed in collaboration with Carnegie Mellon University and West Virginia University. This project uses data-driven approaches to workforce resilience and skills matching, helping workers adapt to economic shifts such as automation and energy transitions. By leveraging analytical tools to identify emerging career opportunities, this initiative enhances the region's ability to prepare for evolving workforce demands.

Technical Assistance Fund: Supporting Regional Growth



Through a Congressionally Directed Spending request supported by Senator Joe Manchin, the NRG Working Group Technical Assistance Fund provides critical planning support for infrastructure projects with justifiable economic impact. The fund targets projects that address essential infrastructure needs for economic growth, support business retention by contracting local businesses for implementation, and enhance regional connectivity through strategic project development. 12 community project applications were submitted for NRG Working Group Technical Assistance funding by non-profits, public entities, and educational institutions within the New River Gorge region. Project stakeholders are encouraged to collaborate and leverage available resources to ensure successful project completion. The Technical Assistance Fund also relies on vendors with proven expertise in infrastructure planning and technical assistance to support project execution.

The NRG Working Group continues to foster sustainable infrastructure development, ensuring long-term economic resilience and connectivity throughout the region.

A LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

Dear Stakeholders,

We are excited to share the remarkable achievements and impact of our efforts in 2024, showcasing the power of collaboration and innovation in the New River Gorge region and Southern West Virginia. This year, we've successfully attracted new businesses, creating jobs and diversifying our local economy. Our strategic initiatives have positioned the New River Gorge as a prime destination for investors, and we are eager to build on this momentum.

Our commitment to business retention and expansion has yielded significant outcomes, with many local businesses growing from targeted support and access to vital resources. Additionally, our focus on small business development and entrepreneurship has been instrumental in launching new ventures and nurturing innovative ideas, further enriching our communities. Improvements in infrastructure and cultural offerings have enhanced the quality of place in our region, drawing new visitors and potential residents.

As we look to the future, we are committed to deepening connections, exploring greater possibilities, and leveraging our successes to drive regional development. Your ongoing dedication is vital to our shared mission, and we are excited to continue this journey together, building a vibrant, resilient economy. Thank you for your unwavering commitment.



Jina Belcher
Executive Director



Judy Moore
NRGRDA Deputy Director and
WV Hive Executive Director

NRGRDA'S DIGITAL GROWTH

The NRGRDA has experienced a remarkable surge in user interaction, engagement, and followers across its website and social media platforms. This uptick in digital presence is a testament to NRGRDA's strategic efforts to connect with its community and stakeholders more effectively. By implementing engaging content, including regular updates on regional developments and interactive multimedia features, NRGRDA has successfully captured the interest of a wider audience. This increase in engagement not only amplifies NRGRDA's mission, but also fosters a stronger community connection, as more users participate in discussions and share content, thereby broadening the organization's reach and influence.

2024 Website Performance



Active Users

11,000

371% increase



New Users

10,000

369% increase



Views

22,000

334% increase



Engagement Rate

46.29%

154% increase

The 2024 analytics data for the New River Gorge Regional Development Authority website (nrgrda.org) is presented in comparison to the metrics from the previous reporting period.

2024 Social Media Analytics



Facebook:

+84 followers gained (*>2% increase from last year*)

2,578 engagement

50,081 impressions/profiles reached

LinkedIn:

+152 followers gained (*>8% increase from last year*)

1,886 engagement

26,561 impressions/profiles reached

WV HIVE'S DIGITAL GROWTH

Similarly, WV Hive has witnessed a significant boost in user interaction, engagement, and follower count on its website and social media channels. This positive trend is largely attributed to WV Hive's commitment to providing valuable resources, insightful business advice, and success stories that resonate with entrepreneurs and small business owners. Through targeted campaigns and community-driven initiatives, WV Hive has cultivated a supportive online environment that encourages active participation and collaboration among its followers. This vibrant digital community not only enhances WV Hive's visibility, but also strengthens its capacity to support and inspire innovation across West Virginia's entrepreneurial landscape.

2024 Website Performance



Active Users

10,000

254% increase



New Users

9,200

253% increase



Views

24,000

265% increase



Engagement Rate

48.22%

177% increase

The 2024 analytics data for the WV Hive website (wvhive.com) is presented in comparison to the metrics from the previous reporting period.

2024 Social Media Analytics



Facebook:

+118 followers gained (>5% increase from last year)

5,925 engagement

252,791 impressions/profiles reached

LinkedIn:

+222 followers gained (>8% increase from last year)

1,663 engagement

21,821 impressions/profiles reached

Special thanks to our board members for their unwavering efforts in providing strategic vision, setting organizational policies, and ensuring compliance. Your commitment to determining programs and budgets, setting fundraising strategies, and enhancing our public image is invaluable.



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Fayette County Commissioner
Fayette County

Board Vice Chair
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Michelle Rotellini
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Our work would not be possible without the network of organizations, municipalities, and funders who are committed to the region's continued growth and success. Thank you for investing your time and resources into growing a more vibrant economy.

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