



Highlands Creative Economy Council  
Monthly Meeting  
January 25th, 2024, at 10 am  
[Recording](#)

**Thursday, January 25th at 10 am ([Recording](#))**

Agenda:

- Welcome!
- Eastern updates
  - Hospitality Training FREE [Lunch & Learn series](#) by Debra Frank
    - March 11 - The How-To's of Creating A Profitable Menu...Or Fixing One, 10:00 - 2:00 pm at South Branch Inn (Moorefield)
    - April 15 - Building A Positive Work Climate
    - May 20 - Controlling Costs Without Sacrificing the Guest Experience
    - More info at [easternwv.edu/workforce-education/hospitality/](http://easternwv.edu/workforce-education/hospitality/)
  - Photovoltaic Solar Installation Training Program
    - Public Seminar February 27 at 6:00 pm
    - March 5 - April 11 - 6 weeks hybrid online & in-person April 10 & 11
    - Register by emailing [WorkforceED@easternwv.edu](mailto:WorkforceED@easternwv.edu)
  - New Ag Farm [Stress Reduction & Sustainability](#) educational series
    - Email [Sloan.williams@easternwv.edu](mailto:Sloan.williams@easternwv.edu) to learn more
- AFNHA Updates
  - Preview of 2024 HCE activities
    - Local Tourism Summits – Organizations who are planning to conduct Tourism Summits this year may apply to HCE for event cost support ([application](#)).
    - Fam Tours – funds available to support regional Familiarization Tours for staff and volunteers to learn about local assets ([application](#)).
    - Tourism Partner Network – We are developing our [criteria](#) for promotion of regional tourism assets. Reach out if you are interested in planning.
  - “Passing the Torch” celebration Friday 26<sup>th</sup>, 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.
    - at the Appalachian Forest Discovery Center (101 Railroad Ave, Elkins). Come and go as you please. Presentation at 5:30. Light refreshments will be served. Virtual attendance will be available 5:30 - 6:30 ([zoom link](#))

- Our new Indigenous Appalachia project will feature exhibits and events with indigenous artists and presenters. To share ideas, contacts, or get involved contact Phyllis phyllisb@afnha.org or Larry at [larry@afnha.org](mailto:larry@afnha.org).
- We are still accepting stories for our [America250 in the Appalachian Forest](#) project. Send ideas or stories to Ben at [ben@afnha.org](mailto:ben@afnha.org).
- Guest Speaker
  - Andrew Walker - [Mountaineer Trail Network](#)
    - Legislatively created recreation authority for non-motorized trails in 16 WV counties. Sister to Hatfield-McCoy Trail Network. Created to limit liability for partners and private landowners within the network. Also acts as an EDA to assist with infrastructure and development programs.
    - Main mission is to identify existing or upcoming enhancement opportunities, and promote recreation opportunities.
    - 5 trail hubs including Big Bear Lake Camplands in Preston County, Camp 70 in Tucker County, Cheat River Water Trail, and Snowshoe Backcountry.
    - Infrastructure projects include installing informational kiosks and Hub signs for wayfinding and emergency services, restrooms, and change rooms.
    - Alex Fliegel (Webster County CVB) – How do you deal with pushback from private landowners? Do you help with the trail development/building itself?
      - Liability protection has been the most effective talking point for us. We focus more on enhancing existing trails than building new trails, but can connect with other partners and resources like OEDC at WVU.
    - Martha Macgill (Wills Creek Museum) - Are there connections planned in for C&O or GAP trails in MD?
      - No, but we are focused on connectivity with other rail trails. For example, Parkersburg to Pittsburgh trail only needs around 13 extra miles for full connectivity with our network to PA & MD.
      - Jeff Simcoe (Maryland Forest Service) – Does the legislation include liability protection for hunting leases that include other types of recreation?
        - Yes, hunting and fishing are included as supported non-motorized recreation in the legislation.
  - Attendee Discussion / Extended Networking –
    - Rob Burns - [Potomac Highlands Producers](#) boxes available again
    - Lindsay Kazarick (Future Generations) – The first date of Mountain State Maple Days is coming up February 17. See [www.wvmspa.org/our\\_farms](http://www.wvmspa.org/our_farms) for the list of participating businesses. Pendleton County is also doing a [weekend giveaway](#) for Maple Days.
    - Amber Higgins (Barbour Co Development Authority) – [Valentine's Dinner](#) at Adaland in Philippi, 2:00pm Sunday, Feb 11th. Lurchfest 2024 will be August 3<sup>rd</sup>.
    - Anne Beardslee (Elkins-Randolph County Tourism) – Winter train excursion running through March. Ramps & Rail Festival will be April 27<sup>th</sup>.
  - Save The Date! The next meeting is **February 22nd, 2024**, at 10 AM on [Zoom](#).