

Stay connected with McDowell

McDowell County is an American story that deserves a new chapter—one filled with promise, with goodwill, with the type of shared commitment that offers solid reasons to believe in a brighter future. Be a part of this historic partnership and show your support for McDowell's children and the greater community by joining the effort at www.ReconnectingMcDowell.org.

Families Enjoy Community Baby Shower

The annual McDowell County community baby shower was held May 6, and gifts were distributed to expecting and new mothers to help them care for their babies. The shower, which was sponsored by a variety of local organizations and businesses, provided 60 families with diapers, toys, clothes and more. The event featured fun activities for the whole family, giveaways and a raffle for which the winner received a diaper bag filled with supplies and toys. Reconnecting McDowell staff member Debbie Elmore presented two baby strollers, a car seat, a Pack 'n Play and a diaper bag that were donated by Reconnecting McDowell.



▲ More than 60 McDowell County families attended the community baby shower this year.

Ready Freddy Program Helps Make Early Childhood Transition Easier

McDowell County Schools is implementing the Ready Freddy Program to encourage successful transitions into early learning classrooms. Ready Freddy uses a frog mascot that engages young students in classrooms and at events, such as the Early Childhood Fair—which highlighted the importance of early childhood education. The program focuses on the importance of pre-K and kindergarten attendance for stu-

dents and teachers, which is essential to student success. It is a collaborative effort that includes all stakeholders—parents, community resource providers and district staff—to ensure its success. The district is planning fall events that will officially introduce the program to each school. This summer, early learning and kindergarten staff will receive professional development on successful transitions.



▲ The Ready Freddy Program will use this frog mascot to bring awareness to the importance of school attendance for young students.

McDowell Expo

The next McDowell Expo will be held at the Welch National Guard Armory on June 10 (10 a.m. to 5 p.m.) and June 11 (10 a.m. to 3 p.m.). The theme is "Expanding Opportunities

for Success." The free event will showcase a job fair, state and local agencies, McDowell County students, the school district and community schools. The expo was developed to facilitate

re-entry into the workforce and will provide job opportunities, résumé reviews, and more. For more information, contact Kris Mallory (kmallory@aftwv.org).

Renaissance Village Building Site Undergoes Asbestos Removal

McDowell County Commission employees began removing asbestos from the Best Furniture building on May 16. This will allow for safe demolition of the building, which will clear the way for construction of Renaissance Village—a housing project led by Reconnecting McDowell. The highly anticipated project will not only provide apartments for teachers and County residents, but also will house small businesses. Renaissance Village seeks to address some of the challenges facing the County, such as the lack of housing and jobs, as well as low teacher retention rates. Demolition is scheduled to begin in June.



◀ **McDowell County Commission President Harold McBride, left, and Reconnecting McDowell Project Manager Bob Brown discuss the Best Furniture building demolition, while commission employees remove asbestos from the structure.**

A poster for a community outreach event. The background is green with yellow sunflowers at the bottom. The text is in various colors and fonts. It includes the title "Turn McDowell Around", the Facebook logo, "McDowell County Community Initiatives", "COMMUNITY OUTREACH", "at Welch National Guard Armory", "Thursday June 23rd 5:30pm", "DYNAMIC TEAM BUILDING", "Our Mission: To come together and form a plan to attack the problems in our community head-on...", "Contact Joel McKinney for Information 304.887.9989", and the phrase "Light Meal Will Be Served".

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◀ **The next Turn McDowell Around meeting is scheduled for June 23 at 5:30 p.m. at the Welch National Guard Armory. The monthly meetings are organized by community residents who are leading efforts to tackle the challenges facing the County.**

Social Media

- Follow us on Twitter @ReconnectMcD
- Follow us on Instagram: @ReconnectMcD
- Like us on Facebook: [facebook.com/ReconnectMcD](https://www.facebook.com/ReconnectMcD)

For a list of Reconnecting McDowell partners, visit <http://www.ReconnectingMcDowell.org/partners>

Want to get involved or learn more?

For more information about Reconnecting McDowell or to find out how you can get involved, contact Kris Mallory, kmallory@aftwv.org, or Debra Elmore at delmore@aftwv.org or 304-552-5766.