

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.

Innovation Challenge for Coal-Reliant Communities

Reconnecting McDowell recently won a grant to participate in a Coal-Reliant Innovation Fund workshop. The Innovation Fund—established by the National Association of Counties and the National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation, with the support of the U.S. Economic Development Administration—provides training, strategy-related guidance, and networking opportunities for regional and county leaders who are looking to reignite the economies

of coal-reliant communities.

The McDowell team, which included McDowell County Schools Superintendent Nelson Spencer, County Commissioner Harold McBride and former County Manager Clif Moore, was one of seven chosen from a nationwide pool of applicants to attend a workshop in Pikeville, Ky., April 22-24. The team presented its vision of diversifying the county's economy, improving infrastructure and the public schools, and utilizing McDowell's natural

beauty to make the County a flourishing tourist attraction.

Workshop facilitators and practitioners provided guidance on creating implementable projects, as well as on how to leverage existing and future funding to execute these revitalization plans. Subsequent steps will be taken to fine-tune the plans, create benchmarks, and inform state partners and the community—with an eye on successfully bringing to fruition the vision for McDowell County.

McDowell Educators Lead Community Schools Workshop at TEACH Conference



◀ **McDowell County educators lead a workshop on starting a community school. From left, Cheryl Cruey, supervisor of curriculum and instruction; Greg Cruey, president of AFT McDowell; Florisha McGuire, principal of Southside K-8 School; Jennifer Bragg, Title I math interventionist; and Sarah Muncy, community school site facilitator.**

Educators from Southside K-8 School led a well-received workshop for participants at the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) 2015 TEACH Conference, held in Washington, D.C., in July. The session discussed the process for establishing a community school, including priority areas, challenges and next steps. Greg Cruey, president of AFT

McDowell, and Florisha McGuire, principal of Southside K-8 School, discussed the obstacles facing families in McDowell County and their effect on students' performance in school. The presenters highlighted the ways in which Southside K-8—as a community school—addresses these issues, for example, keeping students active and healthy by establishing

an activity center. Sarah Muncy, Southside's site facilitator, discussed her role in executing a successful community school and how her work allows teachers to focus on educating their students. Workshop attendees were eager to learn more about Southside's efforts and how they can support the school and Reconnecting McDowell.

One step closer to making Renaissance Village a reality

The Reconnecting McDowell Board of Directors has selected West Virginia's own Human Resource Development and Employment Inc. (HRDE) to serve as developer of our housing project. CHP Design Studio will be the architect. This is an important step forward in the plans for Renaissance Village, which will provide much-needed housing for teachers and other professionals in McDowell County.

Architectural Rendering of Renaissance Village.



Reconnecting McDowell Partners Convene in Welch

More than 100 Reconnecting McDowell partners came together for the biannual partners meeting,

held Aug. 31 at Twin Falls State Park and Sept. 1 at the Welch Armory. Representing various businesses,



government and education agencies, the partners heard from McDowell County Schools Superintendent Nelson Spencer about two key education priorities: addressing chronic absenteeism and ensuring that all students are reading by third grade. Working together, the partners strategized about solutions to meet these challenges head-on and overcome them.



NEW FOOTBALL EQUIPMENT

Thanks to a generous \$20,000 donation from the NFL Players Association and the NFL Foundation, Mount View and River View High Schools are receiving new football equipment, including helmets and shoulder pads. The AFT enlisted the support of the NFLPA and NFLF to ensure that the student-athletes had all the equipment necessary for a safe and successful season.

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@aftww.org, or Debra Elmore at delmore@aftww.org or 304-552-5766.