



The BRECC National Network

connecting coal communities

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BUILDING RESILIENT
ECONOMIES *in*
COAL COMMUNITIES

New BRECC Toolkit: Coal Communities' Pathways for Economic Diversification

September 29, 2025

AGENDA

Introducing the BRECC Toolkit

- Erik Pages, President, EntreWorks Consulting

Elementary School to Housing

- Hon. Tammy Tincher, Commissioner, Greenbrier County, W.Va.

Access to Community College Education

- Cora Gnegy, Director of Tourism and Economic Development, Giles County, Va.

Downtown Revitalization in Richwood

- Amy Baker, Vice President, Corporate Communications and Marketing, MVB Financial Corp.
- Cecil Ybanez, Co-founder and Owner, Bloomfield Richwood, Nicholas County, W.Va.

Audience Q&A

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Erik Pages
President
EntreWorks Consulting

The BRECC Economic Diversification Toolkit

Economic Diversification Steps

- STEP 1:** Assemble the leadership team
- STEP 2:** Review existing plans for assets/gaps
- STEP 3:** Identify key partners and roles
- STEP 4:** Engage the community
- STEP 5:** Set strategic initiatives and SMART goals
- STEP 6:** Implement the plan
- STEP 7:** Monitor progress and results
- STEP 8:** Tell the story

Downloadable Worksheets

- Partner Roles and Responsibilities
- Assets Inventory
- Strategic Options sampler (by timeframe)
- Community Engagement Options & Activity Plan
- SMART Goal Setting Guide
- Glossary of Terms & References
- Power Generation Comparison Chart

The BRECC Economic Diversification Toolkit

8 Economic Diversification Strategies + County Examples

- All-of-the-Above Energy Approach
- Outdoor Recreation and Tourism
- Downtown Revitalization + Small Business
- Strategic Infrastructure Investment
- Expanded Housing Supply
- Workforce Development and Training
- Repurposing Former Mine Lands
- Business and Remote Worker Attraction

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Hon. Tammy Tinch
Commissioner
Greenbrier County, W.Va.

A Blueprint for Collaboration: Partnerships in Housing Development

Rupert School Repurposing
Greenbrier County, West Virginia



2016 Historic Flooding



Community Gatherings and Planning



Blueprint
COMMUNITIES®

Rupert Elementary School



Rupert School Apartments



Rupert School Apartments



Rupert School Apartments

Rupert School LP APARTMENT FOR RENT

Our spacious and modern apartments offer everything you need for comfortable and convenient living.

Each unit contains a stove, refrigerator, dishwasher, washer & dryer, microwave, central heating and air conditioning.

Looking for the perfect place to call home? Look no further than Rupert School Apartments

AVAILABLE UNITS:

16 - 1-bed/1-bath (700-800 SF)

4 - 2-bed/1-bath (900-1000 SF)

Mixture of market rate and income-restricted units.

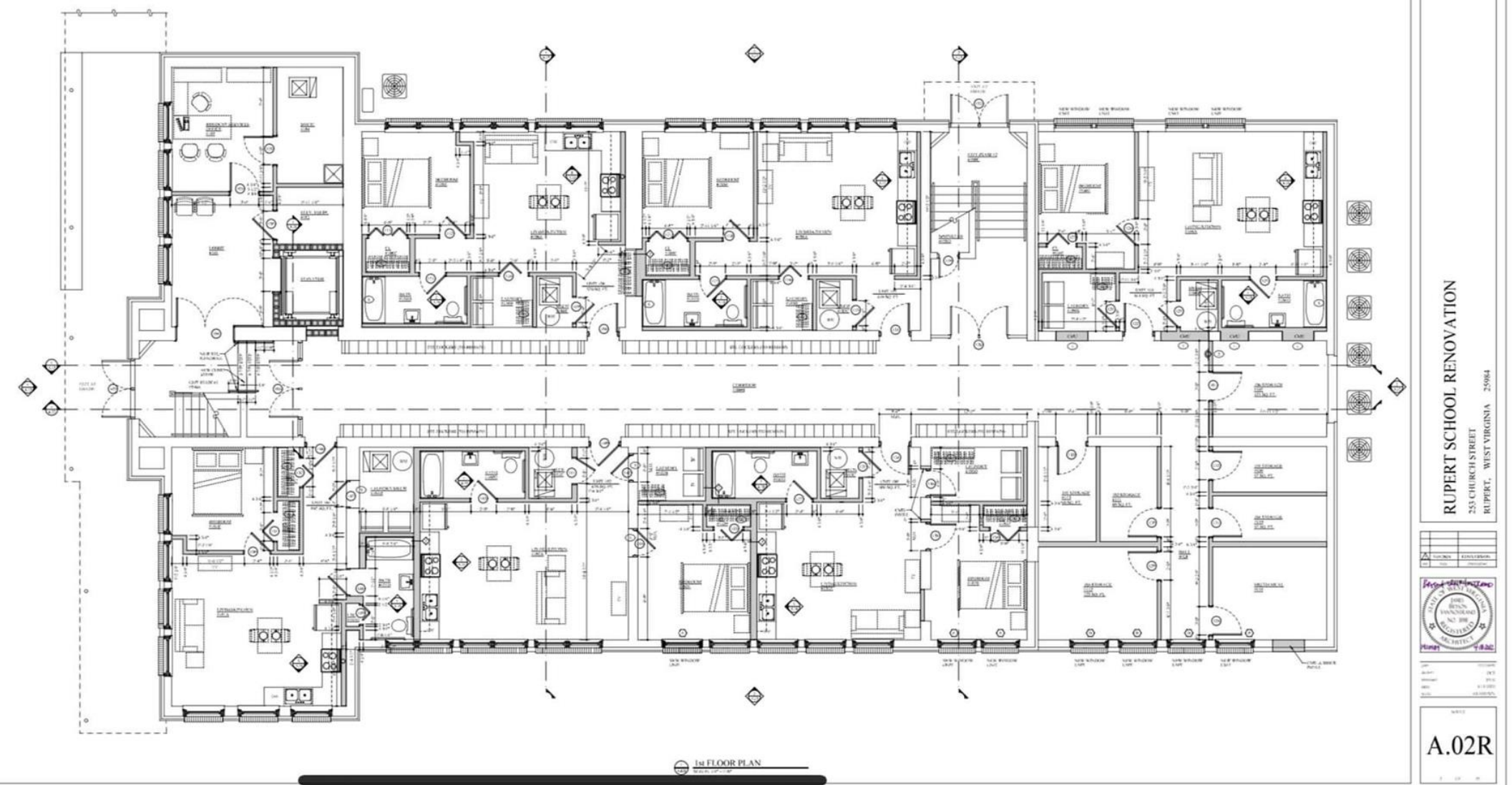
Contact Dana at:

dcavendish@mountaincapwv.org

OR call 304-438-7879

Projected to be available in Mid-February 2025

www.mountaincapwv.org



A photograph of a two-story brick elementary school building with many windows. The name 'RUPERT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL' is visible on the side of the building. The image is faded to serve as a background for the text.

Thank You

**Commissioner Tammy Tincher
Greenbrier County Commission
tammyshifflet.tincher@gmail.com**

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Cora Gnegy
*Director of Tourism and
Economic Development
Giles County, Va.*

Access to Community College Education

Prepared for NACO BRECC webinar

9/29/2025



Giles County, VA

- Located in Southwest Virginia
- Population just over 16,000
- Rural community
- 4 towns
- County Board of Supervisors
- Farming, forestry, tourism
- Strong manufacturing history and workforce



The need for the ACCE program:

- Workforce development program
- Availability of and skills needed for local employment opportunities
- Volunteerism decline national < our active approach
- Reduction of family financial burdens for education
- Combat apathy to neighbors and community < engage our young people in communities of people and place to instill pride and sense of place
- Partnerships:
 - Public-Private Partnerships with Board of Supervisors, endowed scholarships, New River Community College Educational Foundation, private personal and corporate donations and sponsors



Community Impacts

- 400+ kids have received an education with no debt
- Built a respected program and brand
- Community has donated more than \$1 million
- Created a program endowment (And 9 endowed scholarships!)
- More than 40,000 hours of community service
- NRV Valley-wide workforce development program





By the Numbers

- Prior to this school year we've supported **330 Giles County** students through their competition of the ACCE program
- There are **43** students involved last school year
- A total of **374** students have benefited at least in part of direct ACCE program involvement
- Started in 2014 and to date now 1,750 students throughout the New River Valley of Virginia have benefited from the ACCE Program
- Of those 1,750; 275 students are currently enrolled in the ACCE program this calendar year at **New River Community College**
- 2024-2025, **\$33,600** in private donations have been given to the Giles County ACCE program



Funding & Replication

- The Giles County Board of Supervisors funds \$75,000+ annually to the program
- Endowments and donations make up significant portion
- We fundraise!
- Trust and empowerment to replicate
- Schools, Board, Sponsors, Staff, & Students

Learn More & Reach Out!

The Giles ACCE website: <https://gilesacceallin.com/>
NRCC ACCE program: <https://www.nr.edu/acce/>
Giles website: <https://virginiasmtnplayground.com/>

Cora Gnegy

Tourism & Economic Development

cgnegy@gilescounty.org



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Cecil Ybanez
*Co-founder & Owner
Bloomfield Richwood
Nicholas County, W.Va.*



Amy Baker
*Vice President
Corporate
Communications
and Marketing
MVB Financial Corp.*

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2016 Flood in Richwood, WV

- No lives were lost in our city, but the flood caused billions of dollars in damage.
 - Homes
 - Infrastructure
 - Richwood High School
 - Richwood Middle School
 - Nursing Home
- Political fallout related to alleged misuse of FEMA funds took years to overcome.
- The silver lining: Current residents and those with strong ties to Richwood joined and rallied together to bring Richwood back to life.
- Richwood perseveres because of the resilience of its people.



Progress Since the Flood

- \$42 million approved contemporary K-12 school facility actively under construction.
- 45 new local businesses have started in Richwood since the 2016 flood.
- The city along with Region 4 Planning and Development Council, will oversee \$30 million in infrastructure projects in the next four years:
 - \$2.5 million for a surface intake/impound structure on the Cherry River;
 - \$7.5 million project to move sewer lines out of the flood plain and repair deteriorated lines;
 - \$17.5 million to relocate Richwood's wastewater treatment plant;
 - \$800,000 to complete a broadband project for residents of Hinkle Mountain;
 - Over \$800,000 for a sidewalk project;
 - \$260,000 for demolition of derelict buildings from DLap fund.
- Volunteers renovated the armory to create a vibrant community center.
- The city pool has been renovated, and volunteers continue to fund free swim days.
- Events including the Cherry River Festival, the Feast of the Ramson, the Scenic Mountain Triathlon, the Hometown Marketplace, Music in the Garden, Art Walk Richwood and the Mountain Color Arts Festival continue to draw crowds.

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Cecil's Success Story

- David and Cecil bought a building in downtown as a result of the 2016 flood destroying David's family home, intending to make an apartment for themselves to stay in during visits.
- Ended up buying a home in Richwood and moving to Richwood in 2020.
- Created La Bonita Richwood Airbnb in 2020 and Bloomfield Richwood art gallery in 2021 out of the downtown building.
 - La Bonita was the fourth Airbnb to open in town; there are now currently 14 independently owned Airbnb's in operation.
 - Bloomfield Richwood has shown over 110 artists exclusively from Appalachia since 2021 and hosted 25 opening receptions and multiple music and art events since opening.
- Plans to open a bed and breakfast in their current home (renovations are currently underway).

LA BONITA RICHWOOD



SINTERED
SCULPTURES BY
JAMEY BIGGS
JANUARY 27 - MARCH 6, 2022

BLOOMFIELD RICHWOOD
ART & OBJECTS
17 EAST MAIN STREET, RICHWOOD WV 26261
TEL: 503.703.4877



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BRECC formed a cohesive team of dedicated community volunteers with a unified vision.

ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION FOCUS



Downtown Revitalization & Housing

- Make Richwood more investor-ready, address resident wellness by redeveloping the historic downtown, increasing efforts to recruit remote workers, and analyzing housing challenges.



Outdoor Recreation

- Invest in and expand existing natural assets to promote local health and encourage tourism.



Arts & Culture

- Integrate arts and culture throughout economic diversification pathways to encourage tourism and local pride.





Impact of BRECC for Richwood

- Richwood's beautiful and unique setting between the Monongahela National Forest and Summersville Lake and the New River Gorge Bridge is the city's main physical asset.
- Strengthening the already growing arts & culture scene in Richwood enhances the quality of life for current residents and attracts visitors.
- Two housing studies have indicated that there is interest in relocating to Richwood, which could be a niche to target remote workers who love the outdoors and want to live where they play. Limited availability of housing is a barrier to relocation.
- The G.C. Murphy Building renovation project is part of the current Opportunity Appalachia cohort.



G.C. Murphy Building Project – Past & Present



G.C. Murphy Building Project – Future



Questions?

Please share your questions in Q & A

BRECC Toolkit

Toolkit Access:

Will be available at: www.naco.org/brecc

Additional Questions?

Jennifer Kuiper

Program Director, Economic and Workforce Development

National Association of Counties

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Thank You!