



Highlands Creative Economy Council  
Monthly Meeting  
March 28th, 2024, at 10 am  
[Video Recording](#)  
[Automatic Transcript](#)

**Thursday, March 28th at 10 am ([recording](#))**

- Eastern Updates
  - Hospitality Training FREE [Lunch & Learn series](#) by Debra Frank
    - April 15 - [Building A Positive Work Climate](#)
    - May 20 - [Controlling Costs Without Sacrificing the Guest Experience](#)
    - Please RSVP to robert.burns@easternwv.edu or debra.frank@easternwv.edu
  - Hospitality & Tourism Program Advisory Committee meeting May 6, 11:30-1:00
    - Looking for committee members and hosts for Internship Program
    - Email debra.frank@easternwv.edu if interested
  - Ag Farm Stress Reduction & Sustainability educational series
    - September 14 in Wardensville
    - Email: [Sloan.williams@easternwv.edu](mailto:Sloan.williams@easternwv.edu) to learn more
  - Vendor “[Extravaganza!](#)” May 17
  
- AFNHA Updates
  - AmeriCorps Site Applications due April 8 – email afnha@afnha.org for application. Check your email for an automated invite from Wizehive.
  - Save the Date: Annual Stakeholder Meeting - June 18 in Buckhannon
  - Funding available to support tourism related and capacity building events
    - Local Tourism Summits - apply by [google form](#) or [PDF](#)
    - Themed Tours - apply by [google form](#) or [PDF](#)
    - Applications should be submitted at least 4 weeks prior to the event. Funds will be awarded on a first come first serve basis.
    - We are using a broad definition. We encourage any gathering that builds capacity or supports tourism.

- 2024 [Appalachian Forest Grants applications](#) open soon. Let us know if there are any other priorities that you would like to address. This may be a 1 year grant period rather than 2 years.
  - We are also taking volunteers to serve on our Grant Review Committee
  - Extra match support is available for current 23-25 grantees. Will also be available in the coming 2024 grant period.
  
- Featured Discussion - Indigenous Appalachia
  - Our major interpretive project this year is looking at connections to native peoples in our region, ancestrally and today.
  - New exhibit in the Appalachian Forest Discovery Center “Creating Home: Indigenous Roots and Connections in Central Appalachia” opening May 18. Will feature four sections: Material culture, arts; placenames and language revitalization; use of the forest; and regional history from archaeological and native perspectives.
  - This is part of a larger programming series which will include several events:
    - May 18 exhibit opening with Seneca artists and demonstrations, and a dinner exploring native and Appalachian foods. Please RSVP for dinner (more details TBA).
    - Will host other events June 29, sometime in August, and symposium sometime in the fall.
  - We also want to showcase what our partners are doing related to this
    - Martha Macgill – Wills Creek Museum is opening in April, which will include info on local Shawnee people. We would also like to feature some other stories at Heritage Days in September.
  
- Attendee Discussion / Extended Networking –
  - Erik Kreuzsch (National Park Service) – There are 62 National Heritage Areas in the United States (26 in the Northeast region). The National Heritage Areas Act in 2022 created a formalized National Heritage Areas Program within NPS.
    - NHAs engage in public-private partnerships to tell authentic stories, weave together nature and culture, work beyond park boundaries to make federal dollars reach further, and conserve landscapes and traditions.
    - Newly passed federal budget will include flat funding within 6-8 weeks for the NHA workplans and awards. NHA awards are now centralized in D.C. rather than awarded by regional officers.
  - Sam Kniery (Mon Forest Towns) - Please join the Mon Forest Towns Partnership in Elkins, WV, on April 17th for a “Mon-U-Mental” Stakeholder Event. Featuring breakout sessions for Heritage, Conservation, Business Development, Health and Accessibility, and the Arts, we would love to see anyone interested come out to

discuss challenges, successes, and how the Mon Forest Towns can help its partners going into the future! RSVP: <https://forms.gle/BdJJGSc6xCKjdHKB6>

- Amber Higgins (Barbour Co. Development Authority) – Upcoming Barbour County events: Saturday, Mar 30: Belington’s Easter Extravaganza walk-through event (park & enter by the library), 10-11:30am; Sunday, April 7th: Race to Lil’ Moe’s in Philippi, WV Mountain Bike Association's Cross Country MTB Series, free kids 10 & under, race registration starts at 10:30am; all others register online in advance at [bikereg.com](http://bikereg.com); Monday, Apr 8: [Small Business Solutions for Barbour County](#) meeting, 17 North Event Center , Philippi, 5:30pm; Friday, Apr 26: [Philippi Art Stroll](#), Main Street, 5-8pm; Sunday, May 12: [Mother’s Day Buffet at Adaland Mansion](#), seatings are 12:30, 2:15, and 3:45. Call to make reservations (304) 457-1587.
- Do you own or live in a historic property? Are you a professional who upgrades or maintains residential or commercial properties in West Virginia or Maryland? We'd like you to take a brief anonymous survey about your experiences. Take the survey [at this link](#).

- Save The Date! The next meeting is **April 25, 2024**, at 10 AM on [Zoom](#).

*This will be an open discussion; everyone is welcome.*