



Highlands Creative Economy Council  
Monthly Meeting  
November 30th, 2023, at 10 am  
[Link to recording](#)

**Thursday, November 30th at 10 am (ZOOM)**

Agenda:

- Eastern Updates
  - Save the date - Hospitality Lunch & Learn series: The How-To's of Creating a Profitable Menu or Fixing One, Monday, March 11, 2024, 10am-2 pm; Building a Positive Work Climate, Monday, April 15, 2024, 10am-2pm; Controlling Costs without Sacrificing the Guest Experience, Monday, May 20, 10am-2pm.
  - Welcome to new Hospitality & Tourism Program Specialist Morgan Armentrout
  - Solar Educational Seminar, December 4 at 6 pm Eastern Room 104B or on zoom (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88689017088>)
- AFNHA Updates
  - Staff updates – Larry Jent has joined our staff as a fundraiser.
  - Materials from our 11/03 Interpretation Training available [here](#)
    - Please take our [feedback survey](#) if you attended
  - We will have grant funds available to assist with local tourism summits. Keep this in mind as you plan your own events this year. More details TBA.
- Group Discussion – Building AFNHA as a destination: Tourism Sites and Standards
  - We are trying to establish a new partner category for tourism assets in our region.
  - What are the benefits of partnership? Included in promotion of AFNHA as a regional tourism destination.
    - Alex Fliegel (Webster Co. CVB) – cross-promotion strengthens your own organization's legitimacy.
    - Sarah Myers (Deep Creek Adventure Bureau) – I appreciate the opportunity to collaborate and share the uniqueness of small communities.
    - Mary Hufford (LIKEN) – We are looking into agroforestry and agritourism as a destination
  - Partner expectations: Should fit AFNHA themes (this can be flexible), agree to communicate contact info with AFNHA annually, agree to our [core values](#), may be cooperating partners (simple MOU) or program partners (grantee, AmeriCorps site, etc).

- Types of partners/sites – How do we include all types of partners in a way that makes sense to visitors?
  - *Discover* – staffed, open sites: attractions that interpret themes or assets; or visitor centers that provided info about themes and attractions
  - *Explore* – unstaffed, on your own explorations. May or may not include interpretation like wayside signage, self-guided tours. Or recreation experiences- trails, outfitters, etc.
  - *Experience* – scheduled participatory events. Events, performances, workshops, by-appointment visits or tours.
- How do we define expectations for participating partners?
  - Discover sites: clearly identify with AFNHA (use of logo or banner/display), provide visitor services, open a minimum # of days/year.
    - Could be goal/sliding scale. Top-level/active partners might receive special designation, could be included in NPS passport program or other promotions, may be asked to report some visitor data.
  - Michele Moure-Reeves (Hardy Co. CVB) – CVBs are required to be open to the public 40 hours a week, and complete annual surveys.
  - Explore partners: Would need some kind of signage or info available. May be managed or represented by an organization or a nearby site- someone to provide information to AFNHA. Where do we draw the line on including individual trails vs. larger systems?
    - Mary – Where would agroforestry trails and sites fit in?
      - Lindsay Kazarick (Future Generations University) – The Experience category could fit in with Mountain State Maple Days events, which will have a passport system in addition to events.
  - Experience: Community or site-based events or programs. Need a sponsoring organization. We are looking into options for calendar/schedule promotion, but it would be the partner responsibility to provide info to AFNHA.
  - Amanda Hollings (Trail Depot) - How are we working with the Department of Tourism?
    - Our NHA boundaries does not match up with the tourism regions organized by WV Tourism. The State tourism agencies can help as a source for events and other info.
    - Jonathan Bellingham (Capon Springs) – I am trying to promote Fling Golf regionally
  - Support businesses – How do food, lodging, our retail businesses fit in? We would leave it to the CVBs to list everyone, but should we include appropriate local business versus chains?
    - Mary Hufford – chains are complicated but important to local communities. May be able to collaborate with individual owners.
    - Michele Moure-Reeves- Our experience with chains has been that though the local manager is interested in participating, the chain administration will not allow brochures, signage, etc.. Makes it difficult to get them to participate.

- Emerging or community sites- may not be ready or willing to open for visitors or promote themselves, or might be more locally-focused
  - Next steps – who wants to help in a task group
- Attendee Discussion / Extended Networking –
  - Anne Beardslee (Elkins-Randolph County Tourism) – Elkins is now “Elfkings” for December events including the upcoming Parade and Christmas Tree lighting on Friday. New winter train will be running from Elkins January 13-March 13.
  - WV Department of Tourism is offering free and low-cost professional development and training opportunities to tourism and hospitality businesses: <https://wvtourism.com/train-your-team-tourism-works/>
  - Alex Fliegel – Webster County Events: [MAGIC ON MAIN STREET](#), December 1 @ 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm; [HACKER VALLEY CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING](#), December 2 @ 4:30 am - 6:00 pm; [COWEN CHRISTMAS PARADE](#); December 2 @ 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm; [CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT DECORATING PARTY](#), December 9 @ 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm;
  - Amber Higgins (Barbour County Development Authority) – Barbour County events:
    - Friday, Dec 1: Philippi Christmas Parade starting at 7pm on Main Street
    - Saturday, Dec 2: Open House and Christmas Bake Shop at [Adaland Mansion](#) starting at 10am; Christmas Craft Show and Holiday Sweet Shop, [17 North Event Center](#), Philippi, 9am-2pm; Community Drive-Through Live Nativity, [New Beginnings Church](#) on Rt 92 near Kasson School in Moatsville, 5-7pm; A Covered Bridge Christmas Gala at [17 North Event Center](#) w/live music by Queen City Funk & Soul, \$12/person or \$20/couple in advance, Call (304) 621-3671 for info
    - Wednesday, Dec 6: Lunch and Learn, Necco Foster Care, 1-3 p.m., Medallion Restaurant, RSVP at [ngreen@necco.org](mailto:ngreen@necco.org) for reservations
    - Saturday, Dec 9: Breakfast w/Santa, [Medallion Restaurant](#), \$15 per person - breakfast, drink, photo op with Santa 8:30-9:30am; Breakfast w/Santa at [Barbour Country Club](#), \$12/person includes breakfast, ornament painting, stories & gift from Santa, 9:30-11am
    - Sundays, Dec 10 and 17: [Christmas Buffet Dinner at Adaland Mansion](#), Adults \$35, children \$12. Reservations required; call (304) 457-1587
    - Wednesday, Dec 13: Senior Coffee Hour, at Golden Rule Building, Belington, 9am; Social Security Workshop, “How Does Employment Affect My Benefits?” [Barbour County Community Garden Market](#), Philippi, 10am-12pm; Open Mic Night, [Molly’s Hand-Dipped Ice Cream](#), Philippi, 7pm
    - Thursday, Dec 14: Family Game Night, 5-7pm every Thu, Golden Rule Building, Belington; PJ’s & Pancakes with the Grinch, [17 North Event Center](#), Philippi, 5:30pm
- Save The Date! The next meeting is **January 25th, 2023**, at 10 AM on Zoom.