



# REGIONAL REVIEW

**Volume 12, Issue 2**

**Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson  
Metropolitan Planning Commission**

**Spring/Summer  
2011**

## 9 COMMUNITIES TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ENERGY GRANTS

**B**arb Zimnox, BHI senior community development specialist, has the task of administering funds provided by the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program that nine local communities have taken advantage of. Ms. Zimnox explains that this is a one-time program funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). It is funding that comes to local communities through the West Virginia Division of Energy.

Ms. Zimnox said that the Brooke-Hancock region was allotted \$316,979. Each region was allowed to run the program at their discretion as long as there were applications that were approved by the Regional Councils and the Department Of Energy at the State level. The local government entities met and decided it would be most equitable that everyone get an equal piece of the pie. Each of the nine communities that submitted an application received \$32,162 with the Regional Council getting the remainder of the allotment—or 8% of the total.

In Hancock County, Chester, New Cumberland and the Hancock County Commission made application. The applicants in Brooke County were Follansbee, Wellsburg, Beech Bottom,

Bethany, Windsor Heights and the Brooke County Commission.

The projects ranged from lighting to HVAC to making energy efficient improvements to their buildings. All were for either city buildings or county court houses.

One project already completed is in the Town of Bethany. Their city building was formerly a large garage housing fire trucks. The Town has slowly been renovating the building, sectioning off the police station and city council chambers. With the grant, the large garage doors were removed. Insulation and drywall were added to all the exterior walls. A drop ceiling was added, along with insulation and new ductwork. Energy efficient doors and lights were installed. The front of the building was re-sided to make it all match. The town plans to rent their new commu-

nity room for parties, showers, dinners, etc. which in turn will provide added revenue.



Mayor Jay Eisenhower shows off the nearly completed community room in the City Building. The energy-efficient project is a good example of the benefits of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program.

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Town of Bethany's newly renovated City Building

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## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**H**ow do you coordinate \$71 million in regional road/bridge/transit improvements? How do you equitably disperse a \$316,979 energy grant among seven deserving communities? How do you partner to create a community resource such as trails and greenways?

Simple. You ask a long-standing, regionally experienced and locally supported agency like BHJ to make a commitment. The following articles highlight this commitment.



### A Three Year Plan for Transportation Improvements

On May 25<sup>th</sup>, the BHJ Commission adopted a three-year plan to spend \$71 million in federal, state, and local monies for constructing highway and public transit projects. From the replacement of the Colliers Way Bridge (\$8.1 million) in Weirton to the ongoing safety inspection of the Jennings Randolph Bridge in Chester (\$970 thousand) to the construction of a new Jefferson County Maintenance Garage (\$6.7 million), our needs and improvements do not stand still.

### The Public Bottom Line: Energy Efficiency for Public Buildings

By the end of calendar year 2011, the seven incorporated communities in Brooke and Hancock Counties, WV, through energy efficiency investments, will have saved significant public dollars. In the case of the Village of Beech Bottom, the installation of a solar array on the roof of the Municipal Building has moved the community into the alternative energy field. Other municipal approaches include energy audits, efficiency lighting, and HVAC updates.

### Building a Future through Trails and Greenways

The Trust for Public lands states “Parks and open space create a high quality of life that attracts tax-paying businesses and residents to communities. Corporate CEOs report that employee quality of life is the third most important factor in locating a new business. Small company owners say recreation, parks and open space are the highest priority in choosing a new location for their business.” If this is the case, partners like the Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Jefferson County Chamber, through their recently released Trails and Greenways Plan, is on the right track.

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## BHJ & COMMUTEINFO—WE'VE BEEN "FROGGIN"

May is a busy month for promoting alternative commuting to work or school. There's National Transportation Week, National Bike to Work Day, National Employee Health and Fitness Day, National Try Transit Week, and National Clean Air Week. BHJ's Rideshare Program partner, CommuteInfo designates May as CommuteInfo Options Awareness Month. The designation is designed to increase the number of people who travel to work or school by riding transit, carpooling, vanpooling or biking.

CommuteInfo suggests using alternatives to driving alone, like vanpooling, carpooling, using public transit or biking to work, are just a few of the ways to lower the cost of commuting. Over 500 commuters already ride to work daily in CommuteInfo's 43 registered vanpools and nearly 500 commuters ride to work daily in the 225 carpools registered with CommuteInfo. The BHJ area is a part of those statistics. Six 15-passenger vans and three registered carpools travel from Weirton-Staubenville into the Pittsburgh area. Currently, there are just four vacant seats on the vans travelling from the tri-county area.



Daniel Truax was the first winner of the \$20 gas card donated by Quik King.

Again this year, BHJ joined with CommuteInfo to promote the benefits of ride-sharing by sponsoring a live remote broadcast with FROGGY Radio 103.5. This year's event was held at the new Quik King on Colliers Way in Weirton. Owner John Riley not only provided space for the broadcast, but he also very generously donated nine \$20 gift cards toward the cost of gas. FROGGY gave away lots of goodies and people had a chance to spin the Birthday Wheel for a chance to win \$103. In addition, CommuteInfo gave away

piggy banks (for all your commute savings) and calculators (to add up all those savings).

BHJ would like to thank all those who participated: John Riley, Lisa Kay Schweyer, Wendy Green and all the staff from FROGGY. A special thanks to Billy Niesslein from FROGGY who promoted and put the entire event together.



Ginger Morris and family poses with Mr. Froggy after she won a gas gift card.



Lisa Kay Schweyer (CommuteInfo) and Mr. Froggy



# A VISION, A MISSION AND A PURPOSE

*Information for this article was obtained from the Jefferson County Trails & Greenways Plan Executive Summary.*

There are some in Jefferson County who have a vision—a vision that will benefit everyone. They have a mission: “To develop trails and protect our greenways while enhancing the quality of life by providing healthy outdoor recreation and economic opportunities linking and strengthening our communities.” They have a purpose—“to implement a Jefferson County Trails and Greenways system.”

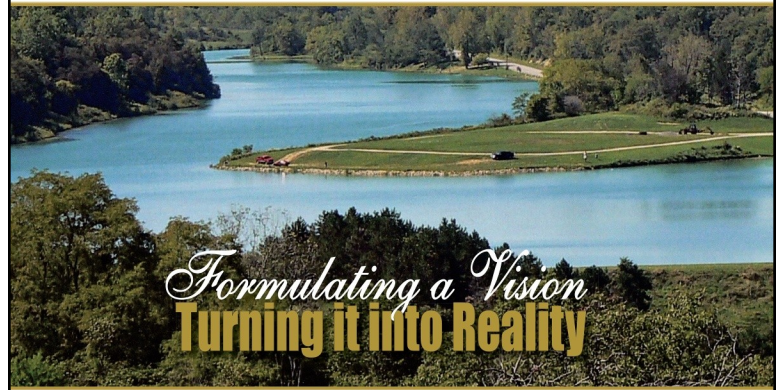
The Jefferson County Trails & Greenways Plan is the outcome of the Jefferson County Community Investment Plan—A Partnership for Growth (CIP) completed in 2008. That plan identified three major goals: (1) enhance the quality of community and family life; (2) improve and expand infrastructure and (3) stimulate workforce and economic growth. A key outcome for each goal was to “improve the overall health of Jefferson County citizens.” The long-term strategy was “to create trails linking communities (biking, walking, running, etc.).

How was the plan developed? A Sub-Committee of the Community Investment Plan, representatives from the Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce, the Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District and BHI explored the long-term strategy “to create trails linking communities (biking, walking, running)”. The sub-committee sought assistance from the Crossroads Resource Conservation and Development Council and the National Park Service—Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program. These organizations formed the Working Group that set goals, created a process document and invited interested stakeholders from the community to be part of a Steering Committee.

Through public meetings and various survey tools, public participation generated support and new ideas and identified opportunities for implementation.

Jefferson County is rich in opportunities for trail development. Example: Under-used rail corridors could be converted to rails-with-trails or using floodplain areas along streams thereby conserving green space. Connecting to other trail and greenway opportunities in neighboring counties and states would create a regional network.

## Jefferson County Trails & Greenways Plan



### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What is a Greenway or Greenspace?" A *greenway* is a linear connection along a natural or manmade feature connecting people to places. Greenways offer recreational, ecological and positive economic benefits for the communities they serve. They preserve important natural habitats and provide wildlife migration routes.

A *greenspace*, on the other hand, is an uninterrupted tract of forest and field important for environmental and wildlife reasons, as well as aesthetic and scenic appeal.

In Jefferson County, there are many such areas—Austin Lake, the Brush Creek area, Cross Creek, Foxes Bottom wetlands, Friendship Park and Fernwood State Forest. There is also Jefferson Lake State Park, the Ohio River waterfront, reclaimed strip mine areas and the riparian corridors of Short Creek and Yellow Creek.

The vision of this group can be realized with local support and involvement. What can you do?

- ◆ **Contact** community officials, agencies, organizations and user groups.
- ◆ **Talk** to your neighbors, businesses and schools
- ◆ **Volunteer** and attend community meetings, help on clean ups and other special events
- ◆ **Contribute Ideas**—Look for opportunities to make the vision a reality.



# JEFFERSON COUNTY TRAILS & GREENWAYS PLAN

A small sample of the Regional Goals include:

## North Region

Explore possible trail connections between:

- \* Amsterdam—Bergholz
- \*Hammondsville - Irondale
- \*Springfield Township and Wintersville to Jefferson Lake State Park and Austin Lake

## Central Region

Development of a trail from Wintersville to Bloomingdale and beyond to Harrison County

Incorporate a bike route along old Route 22

Connect Friendship Park to Bloomingdale, Smithfield and Fernwood State Forrest

## South Region

Create an off-road trail along abandoned rail corridors

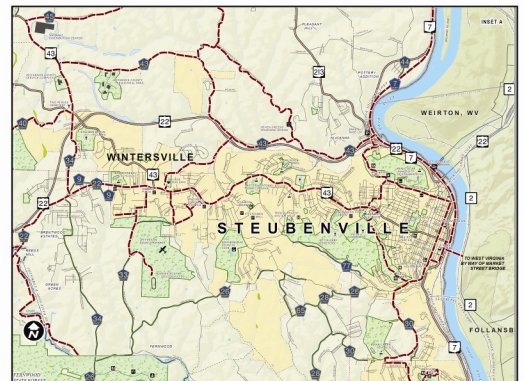
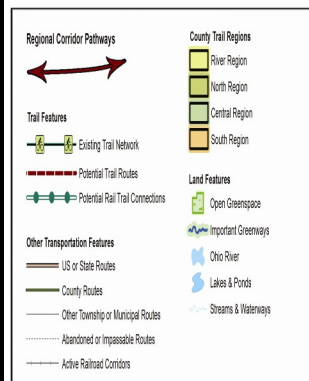
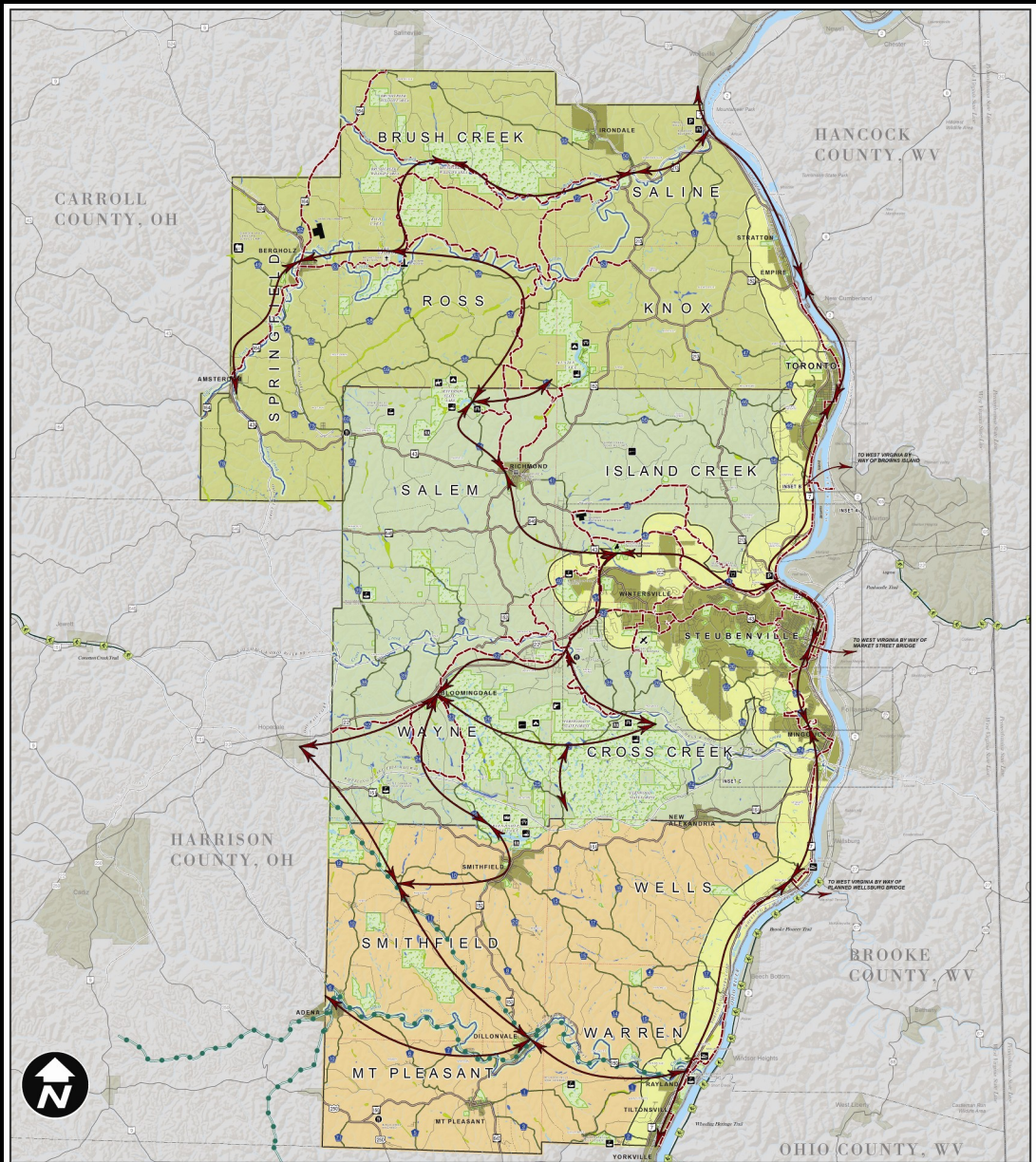
Engage local residents in trail planning between Mt. Pleasant and Dillonvale

Engage neighboring counties of Belmont and Harrison in making regional connections

## River Region

Explore possibility of restoring Browns Island to a recreational facility

Encourage development of and improvements to marinas and recreational access points along the river





# ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND BLOCK GRANT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The only other completed project at this point is the new lighting in the New Cumberland City Building.

The City of Wellsburg has experienced some difficulty in getting approval for their window replacement project in the City building. The building is eligible to be placed on the National Register of Historic Buildings, and West Virginia Culture and History denied approval to replace the existing windows with vinyl windows which look like the original.

Wellsburg was determined to not give up and took the matter to the federal level. They persevered and finally won approval to install the new windows. Now, with just some paper work remaining, it appears



The lighting project for the New Cumberland City Building

Wellsburg will have new windows in County's lighting project is out for the City Building within the next several months.

Other projects are in various stages. For example, Windsor Heights has bid their energy efficient improvements project to their City Building, but with a bid overrun.

The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program has been a plus for communities in West Virginia and has provided the means to make the necessary improvements to become more energy efficient.

## FY 2012-2015 TIP APPROVED

The FY 2012-2015 Transportation Improvement Plan was adopted by the BHJ Policy Board when they met on May 25. Federal legislation defines the TIP as a short-range four-year priority listing of local, state, and federal projects and strategies consistent with the goals and objectives established in the metropolitan area's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The LRTP considers, at a minimum, the twenty-year intermodal transportation needs for both highways and non-highways facilities. The highway element incorporates the preservation, safety, and aesthetic enhancements, of bridges freeways and streets, while the non-highway component includes public transit services, general aviation improvements, off-road bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and rideshare/vanpool programs.

The Board also approved and adopted the agency's FY2012 Overall Work Program and Budget. Copies of both documents are available by contacting the BHJ office.

## HAVE A SAFE FOURTH OF JULY

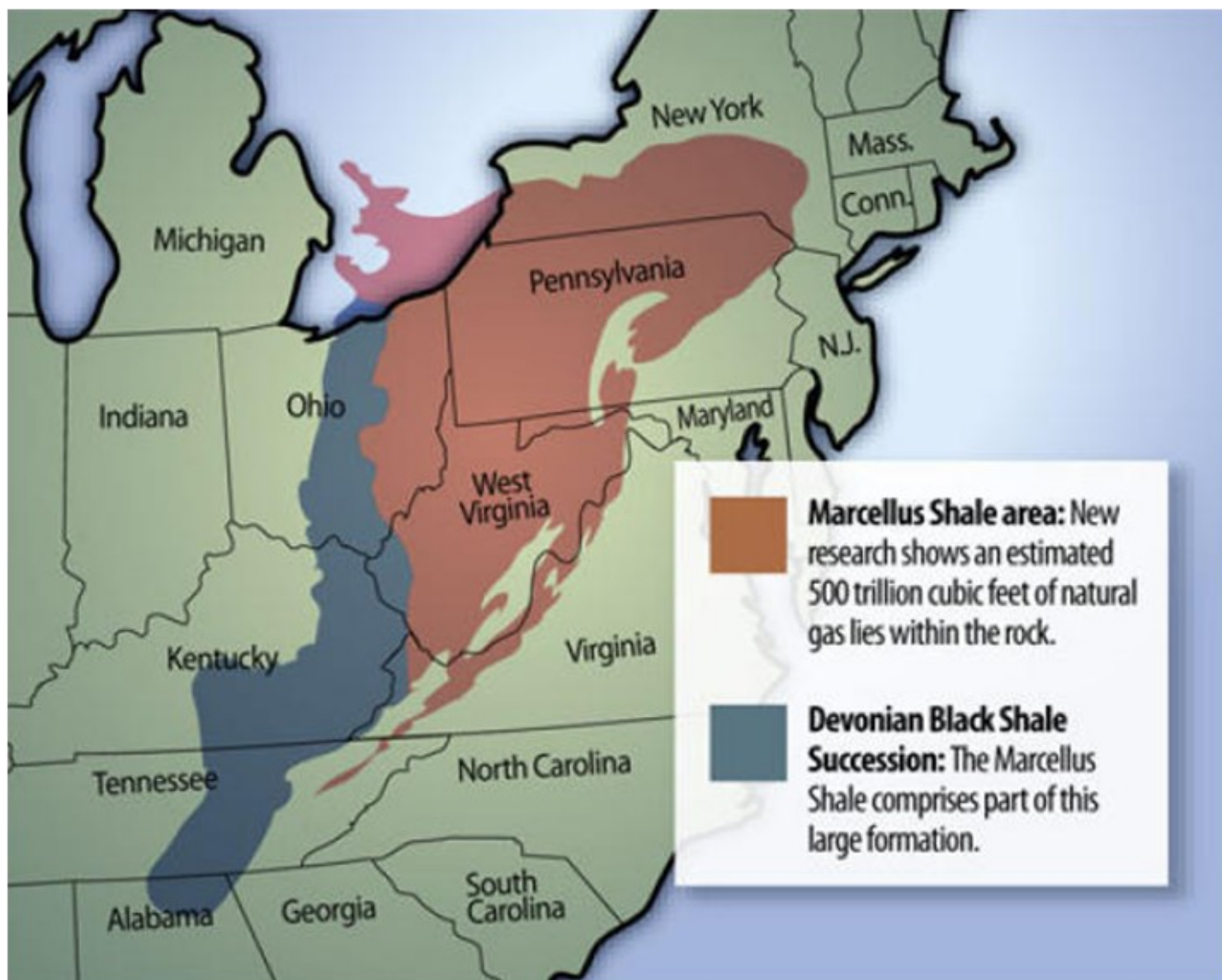


## MARCELLUS SHALE: AN EVOLVING ECONOMIC RESOURCE

Marcellus Shale is the largest shale plate in the US. It is sometimes called the “Saudi Arabia of natural gas.” The formation stretches from **West Virginia** to New York’s southern tier; it’s been estimated that it could meet the US demand for natural gas for anywhere from 3 to 25 years.

In the three-county BHJ region, the whisper of Marcellus Shale first publicly appeared in the region in early 2010. Energy companies provided Power Point illustrations; demonstrated the drilling process; and summarized economic impact. Over the past 15 months, due to actual drilling and private leasing, the whisper has evolved. A mixed bag of employment expansion, community questions, and companion health concerns has stepped forward.

While BHJ is not a direct beneficiary or incorporated entity, its members do fall into these categories. As such, BHJ maintains an up-to-date newspaper file on Marcellus Shale and will participate in several multi-state work sessions to factually illustrate best management approaches. We encourage our membership to contact the BHJ office for background and opportunities.





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## SUMMER CALENDAR

July 4	Fourth of July - Office Closed	
July 5	Executive Committee	Noon
August 1	Executive Committee	Noon
September 6	Executive Committee	Noon
September 28	TAC Full Commission	10:30 Noon

**For a digital copy of  
this newsletter, scan  
the image below.**



# HAVE A SUMMER OF FUN!

## Related Web Sites

Appalachian Regional Commission  
[www.arc.gov](http://www.arc.gov)

Brooke County Economic Development Authority  
[www.brookewv.org](http://www.brookewv.org)

Brooke Pioneer Trail Assoc. Inc  
[www.brookepioneertrail.org](http://www.brookepioneertrail.org)

Business Development Corporation of the  
Northern Panhandle  
[www.bhbdc.org](http://www.bhbdc.org)

CHANGE, Inc.  
[www.changeinc.org](http://www.changeinc.org)

City of Steubenville  
[www.cityofsteubenville.us](http://www.cityofsteubenville.us)

Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce  
[www.jeffersoncountychamber.com](http://www.jeffersoncountychamber.com)

Ohio Department of Transportation  
[www.dot.state.oh.us](http://www.dot.state.oh.us)

Progress Alliance  
[www.progressalliance.com](http://www.progressalliance.com)

State of Ohio Government Information  
[Www.ohio.gov](http://Www.ohio.gov)

State of West Virginia Government Info.  
[www.wv.gov](http://www.wv.gov)

Top of WV Convention and Visitors Bureau  
[www.topofwv.com](http://www.topofwv.com)

U.S. Census Bureau  
[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

U.S. Department of Transportation  
[www.dot.gov](http://www.dot.gov)

U.S. Economic Development Administration  
[www.commerce.gov](http://www.commerce.gov)

Village of Wintersville  
[www.wintersville.net](http://www.wintersville.net)

Weirton Chamber of Commerce  
[www.weirtonchamber.com](http://www.weirtonchamber.com)

West Virginia Department of Transportation  
[www.transportation.wv.gov](http://www.transportation.wv.gov)

West Virginia Development Office  
[www.wvdo.org](http://www.wvdo.org)