

THE LOGAN DAILY NEWS



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Local leaders in SE OH Gather in Support of Entrepreneurs

Nelsonville, OH – On September 17 and 18, members from five area communities attended a two-day training on how to better support entrepreneurs and promote economic growth in their towns. The training was provided in joint effort by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), the **Center for Rural Entrepreneurship (CRE)**, and Rural Action. Held at the Lodge at Hocking College, the group was welcomed by Jeff Daubenmire, Chief of Staff, and Sean Terrell, Director of Special Programs for Hocking College.

The **Center for Rural Entrepreneurship** shared how the Entrepreneurial Communities model has been successful for improving local business growth in rural areas of Kansas, Nebraska, and North Carolina. By forming a community leadership team, stronger community networks are made that help local business owners and the towns to be more prosperous. CRE co-founders Deb Markley and Don Macke worked with teams from Amesville, Logan, McArthur, Nelsonville, and Pomeroy to identify and build on the business opportunities that already exist in each community. For Brad McNally, resident of McArthur, this meant building up the outdoor recreation opportunities of Vinton County. While rural communities are eager to improve their economies, Don Macke reminded the group that successful rural business growth is “a process of a thousand small wins.”

Community teams found the methods covered in the training to be very helpful, including a survey that business owners can fill out for the teams to review. “These surveys will identify strategies for financing, retention, and new prospects for entrepreneurs that we can then present to a larger group of Amesville community members,” said Amesville Mayor Gary Goosman,

The first day concluded with an evening tour of newly renovated Stuart’s Opera House and the Nelsonville Square, which has been a center of new business activity in Nelsonville. The teams also met for a networking dinner hosted by Rocky Boots. Many left the training inspired by the words of Logan team member Dr. Roy Bontrager: “I hear us saying that our community is the people we influence and have an effect on, so it is much more than just a town, or a village—it’s actually a region.”

Rural Action is a member-based sustainable community development organization. Their mission is to foster social, economic, and environmental justice in Appalachian Ohio. The Entrepreneurial Communities Initiative is rallying community-organized support for local business. Learn more about Rural Action at www.ruralaction.org. You can also keep up with their work on Facebook, Twitter, Linked in, and Instagram.



Caption: Rural Action Communities Coach, Dan Vorisek (front right), works with team members from McArthur and Amesville. Image provided by Rural Action.



*Caption: Community Teams from Amesville, Logan, McArthur, Nelsonville, and Pomeroy, pose with Rural Action coaches and the trainers from the **Center for Rural Entrepreneurship**. Image provided by Rural Action.*