



# NEW RIVER ADVOCATE

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### A Note from our Board President

I am delighted that New River Community Partners is providing a newsletter again to let everybody know about what we are doing. We have a lot of good things to share with you and more than can really be put into this newsletter.

2008 marks our ten-year anniversary and we are planning to celebrate this milestone with events in each of our states: North Carolina (June 7, 2008), Virginia (June 14th) and West Virginia (June 21st). We will keep you informed with locations and specific events. Please plan to join us!

-Ernest O'Banion

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## HANDMADE IN AMERICA & NRCP VISIT WITH WEST VIRGINIA COMMUNITIES

In late April, New River Community Partners invited Becky Anderson, executive director of HandMade in America, to visit with community leaders in Union and Hinton about promoting their local arts & crafts.

HandMade in America works to develop community strategies that will enhance western North Carolina's role within the handmade field. "We are fortunate that HandMade in America is willing to share success stories with other regions that are working toward similar goals," Hollis Wild commented on the April trip to West Virginia.

The communities warmly welcomed Becky, Hollis Wild and Ken McFadyen during the two-day trip. In Union, local leaders arranged a visit to the Old Brick Church. Built in 1845 by one of Thomas Jefferson's brick masons, this local heritage asset sustained roof damage during a heavy storm in 2006. New River Community Partners



Hinton Mayor Cleo Matthews (left) and Becky Anderson following Becky's presentation. (Photo courtesy of Rick Moorefield)

has since prepared a grant application to assist the Monroe County Historical Society with restoring the Church. The group enjoyed a tour of other historic buildings in Union before heading to Hinton.

That evening, Becky offered a program to over thirty community leaders and artists in the Hinton

area about how HandMade in America works with communities to promote their place-based assets found in local arts & crafts traditions. Hinton Mayor Cleo Matthews commented that "Arts and crafts are an important part of the future we

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## NRCP NAVIGATOR & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECEIVE NATIONAL AWARDS

The American Heritage Rivers Initiative recognized New River Community Partners' leaders last fall during the annual meeting of the fourteen American Heritage Rivers. The meeting, hosted by NRCP and held in Radford at the SELU

Conservancy, provided the right opportunity to recognize Ben Borda for his several years of dedicated service as the New River Navigator. Ben, who works with the US Army Corps of Engineers, was recently featured by the Corps Castle Comments for

his work with NRCP.

Also recognized was Patrick Woodie, previous NRCP executive director, for his tenure and accomplishments with New River Community Partners.

Congratulations to Ben and Patrick! ■

### **A Note from our River Navigator**

The New River Community Partners hosted the most recent National Meeting of the American Heritage Rivers Initiative at the SELU Conservancy near Radford, Virginia, October 30th to November 3rd, 2006. Owing to the magnificent setting & weather, an outstanding agenda, excellent entertainment & food, and camaraderie, this meeting will go down as one of the best for the AHRI.

The keynote speaker for this event was Congressman Rick Boucher of Virginia's 9th District. We appreciate his support for the AHRI. Another highlight of the meeting was the renewed formation of the American Heritage Rivers Alliance (AHRA) to support the sustainability in carrying out the successful objectives of promoting economic revitalization, natural resource protection and historic and cultural resource preservation.

-Ben Borda

### **A Note from our Executive Director**

We hope that everybody who reads this newsletter will find something new about New River Community Partners. I am honored to join this non-profit organization. I need to express my appreciation to the Town of West Jefferson for having provided me the opportunity to serve as their Town Manager.

It is an exciting time to be involved with New River Community Partners. We are refocusing our efforts to become more available throughout the New River watershed, while not duplicating existing efforts. Every community has its own unique challenges and opportunities that can be helped along the way with the right resources.

If we may be of assistance to your New River community, please let us know. My email address is [execdir@nrpc-ahri.org](mailto:execdir@nrpc-ahri.org).

-Ken McFadyen

## **PROGRAM FOR THE RURAL CAROLINAS ENDS WITH PLENTY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS**



Spanning five years, New River Community Partners administered the Northwest Alliance Program for the Rural Carolinas (PRC). This program is a partnership among The Duke Endowment, the North Wilkesboro District United Meth-

odist Church, consultant MDC, Inc., a local advisory board, and New River Community Partners. In April 2007, the PRC successfully concluded its work assisting the workforce of northwest North Carolina including:

- Training over four hundred job seekers;
- Aiding in the creation of over fifty new businesses;
- Helping the Town of Sparta to participate in the Rural Center's STEP program, resulting in \$200,000 for project implementation;
- Facilitating the establishment of an Individual Development Account program in Alleghany and Ashe counties;

- Providing the initial funding and coordination for an advanced materials economic development cluster. This initiative has since become its own organization and has leveraged over \$2 million in grant funding for industrial development in Alleghany, Ashe and Wilkes counties; and
- Funding the leadership development programs in Alleghany & Ashe counties training over 150 community leaders.

The PRC matched dollar-for-dollar The Duke Endowment's investment.

## **NRCP ASSISTS ALLEGHANY COUNTY**

Last fall, New River Community Partners prepared grant applications for Alleghany County to the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency, which awarded the County a \$200,000 Single Family Rehabilitation (SFR) grant to provide housing rehabilitation assistance to qualifying homeowners. Though funding is targeted toward respective counties, Alleghany County received this grant based upon the application submission. "New River

Community Partners is pleased to have assisted with securing this grant to support Alleghany County's housing programs," Ken McFadyen said.

This SFR grant will be used with the North Carolina Division of Community Assistance's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding of \$400,000. New River Community Partners is assisting the High Country Council of Governments with the CDBG application, by visiting the

applicant homes to inspect rehabilitation needs and assisting the County's selection committee with prioritizing applications.

Some may think that a combined \$600,000 would take care of housing rehabilitation needs in any rural community. Our communities are fortunate to receive this assistance, but a lack of adequate housing is a concern that is ongoing and would be extremely difficult to address without this funding.

## **2007 NEW RIVER SYMPOSIUM**

Radford University hosted the 2007 New River Symposium May 31st to June 2nd. New River Community Partners was one of nine Symposium sponsors that are advancing opportunities within the New River watershed. Ken McFadyen, NRCP's ex-

ecutive director, offered a presentation on New River Community Partners during Thursday's "Watershed Sustainability" session.

Additional sessions covered a range of topics including water quality, New River history, archaeology, environ-

mental education and biota. Special events included a keynote address, information on land conservancy and field trips.

The next New River Symposium could be at Appalachian State University in 2009.

## Z. SMITH REYNOLDS FOUNDATION PROVIDES OPERATING SUPPORT

The Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation is a key partner with New River Community Partners. The Foundation, located in Winston-Salem, has funded NRCP's operations from the beginning. This year, the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation awarded \$20,000 to support our efforts in North Carolina.

With this support, NRCP will initiate an updating of the 1999 work plan for the headwaters section of the New River watershed. Also, continuing

support will be provided to the leadership development programs in Alleghany and Ashe counties. "Foundations like the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation make it possible for New River Community Partners to exist and to help our communities with their projects. We appreciate them and their support for us," Ernest O'Banion commented on hearing the news about the grant award. The Foundation's website is [www.zsr.org](http://www.zsr.org). ■



### *Become a New River Community Partner*

*New River Community Partners is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Organizational funding is provided primarily through foundation grant support and project administration.*

*We also graciously accept contributions, which are tax-deductible, to further our mission to serve the people and communities of the New River watershed.*

Enclosed is my contribution to New River Community Partners in the amount of

\$ \_\_\_\_\_.

*Please make checks payable to:*

**New River Community Partners**  
*and mail to:*  
**PO Box 1641  
Jefferson, NC 28640.**

Please keep my contribution confidential.

*Upon receiving your contribution, NRCP will send you a letter in appreciation and acknowledging your tax-deductible contribution.*



## NRCP WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

So far in 2007, New River Community Partners welcomes two new board members.

**Swanson Carter** is from Hinton and served with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and taught sociology at Rutgers University and West Virginia State University.

**Robert Nicholson** lives in Radford and serves on the City Council and is involved with several community organizations, including the Radford Heritage Foundation and The Community Foundation of the New River Valley.

We also express our

appreciation to **Jim Byrne**, **Craig Mohler** and **Llyn Sharp**, who have recently ended their terms on the Board, for their time and dedication working for our watershed.

Currently, the Board of Directors consists of fourteen community leaders, representing each of the three New River states and a variety of professions and backgrounds. The Board meets quarterly at locations throughout the New River watershed. The Board's composition may include up to twenty-five members. ■

**New River Community Partners is a watershed-based organization.**

Our service area includes:

**North Carolina**– Alleghany, Ashe, and Watauga;

**Virginia**– Bland, Carroll, Craig, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Montgomery, Pulaski, Smyth, Tazewell, Wythe, and the cities of Galax and Radford;

**West Virginia**– Fayette, Greenbrier, Mercer, Monroe, Pocahontas, Raleigh, and Summers counties.

## (FROM PG. 1) WEST VIRGINIA VISIT

are trying to create as a community. We would like to have a creative community designation and develop an educational facility to promote crafts."

The Rollynsburg Baptist Church in Talcott provided accommodations for the group

on the Greenbrier River. The group, joined by Ben Borda, our New River Navigator, met with the organizers of the John Henry Historic Park the next morning to talk about possibilities to promote and develop the Big Bend Tunnel-site of the famous duel

between the 'Steel-Drivin' Man' and the mechanical drill in the 1870s. New River Community Partners is now assisting the local steering committee with the planning and development of the park commemorating the famed John Henry. ■

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*Promoting the  
American Heritage Rivers Initiative*  
*Serving the People and Communities  
of the New River Watershed*

*New River Community Partners' mission is to serve the people and communities of the New River watershed through natural resources protection, historic & cultural preservation, economic revitalization, agriculture, education, transportation and trails. NRCP seeks to provide project assistance to communities throughout the New River watershed by convening stake-holders and leveraging the resources of experience and expertise to help communities with their goals.*

## CANOEING THE NEW RIVER

New River State Park in Alleghany and Ashe counties is celebrating new facility additions this summer. A new visitor center at the 221 Access section of the state park opened in June with a dedication ceremony attended by scores of local residents and State leaders. The visitor center includes 12,000 square feet of exhibit, classroom and office space. With this significant addition to promote the New River, new campsites and a picnic shelter have also been built. The State of North Carolina and New River State Park have a lot to be proud of.

In addition, the recent completion of a second handicapped-accessible canoe access at the Park provides additional recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. With funding provided by the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Re-

sources, New River Community Partners coordinated the planning and construction of the canoe ramp access earlier this summer. Specifically, a concrete ramp has been built from the parking area to the river access point. Also, a rock vein has been installed adjacent to the riverbank to create a less turbulent area for canoeists when moving to or from their canoes.

Enhancing canoe access on the New River coincides with New River Community Partners'

coordination of the New River Blueway map that will be ready in 2007. National Geographic is producing the map through a partnership with the North Carolina Division of Parks & Recreation, National Committee for the New River, Virginia's New River Trail State Park, and US Army Corps of Engineers. National Geographic & NRCP are distributing the blueway map that provides canoeing information from the headwaters to the New River Gorge. ■



New River State Park visitor center. (Photo courtesy of New River SP)