



# ENERGIZING ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITIES

## A Pathway to Prosperity



Source: *The Logan Banner*, January 17 2018, provided by [The Hub](#)

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## Coal River Group creates new program for local entrepreneurs

Coal Valley News

MADISON - The Coal River Group is using funding from a West Virginia Development grant to provide specialized consulting and business development support for existing and startup entrepreneurs in the Coal River Watershed Region.

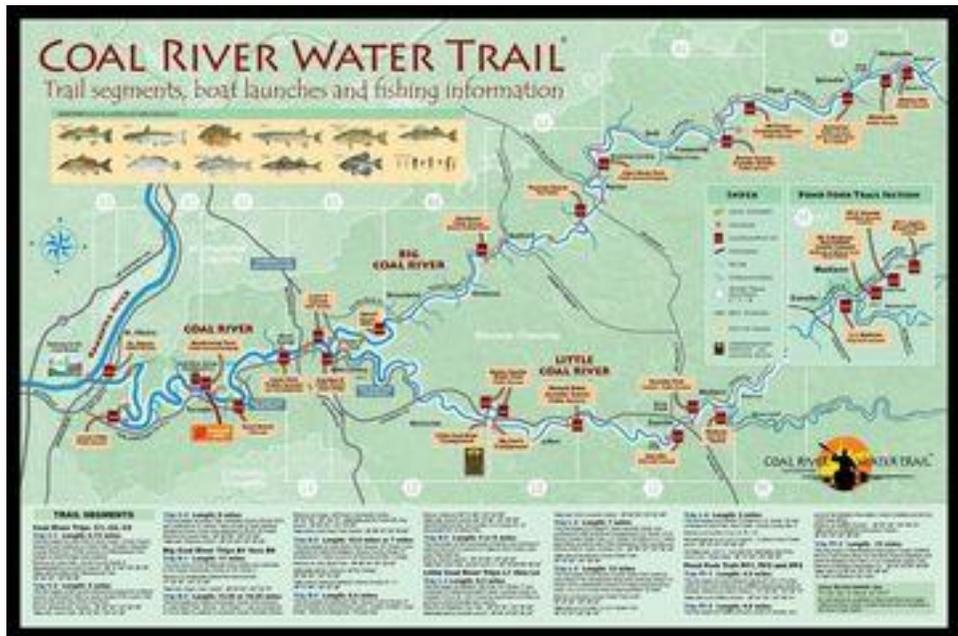
"We see a need for many new businesses to support the growing kayak-based tourism economy in our region," said

Bill Currey, chairman of the non-profit group. "We are fortunate to have funding available to provide support to existing businesses and startups to design web sites, add social media shopping along with help and advice for incorporating new businesses, obtaining permits and a host of services which people need."

The program will continue through the first of July 2018 and the funding will be available to primarily those businesses that are developing services and sales to river-based kayak markets and tourists who come to recreate on the 88-mile-long Coal River Water Trail.

The registration forms can be obtained by contacting Justin at the Coal Rive Group's headquarters or emailing [coalrivergroup@gmail.com](mailto:coalrivergroup@gmail.com) and information to register will be sent.

"The need for new business providers in the tourism industry has grown tremendously throughout the state," Currey said. The growth in flat-water kayaking has outstripped the state's availability of boat launches, river parking, campsites and many other tourism support services. "The need for camping in the Boone, Lincoln, and western Kanawha counties is great," says Currey. "We simply do not have the beds to serve the demand from our growing number of visitors. The visitors from outside the region need food, supplies and services which, in our rural regions, is hard to find."



Kayak anglers are likewise learning and using the rivers in southern West Virginia. The need to provide these adventure-seeking sportsmen is growing every year. For all paddlers on flat-water rivers, the need for transportation for boats and individuals is great. UBER driver service is needed throughout the Coal River Water Trail to help transport paddlers from and to the boat launches and landings.

The upcoming season is also seeing growth in the major river-based events in the region. These river events include the huge Tour De Coal community float in St. Albans. The event has had over 1,000 participants for the past two years. The City of St. Albans, in 2018, has partnered with the non-profit Coal River Group, which sponsors the Tour De Coal to create the new YAK FEST. It should be an exciting two days in St. Albans on June 15 and 16 when thousands of people arrive ready to paddle the Coal River and enjoy the music, craft beer and river exhibitions planned for the Old Main Plaza in that city's revitalized center of town.

