



# ENERGIZING ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITIES

## A Pathway to Prosperity



Source: *Wyoming County Report (wycoreport.com)*, July 25 2018, provided by [The Hub](#)

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## “Grow Wyoming County” – meetings conducted

by *Mary Catherine Brookes, Wyoming County Bureau Chief*

OCEANA — One of the goals of the Grow Wyoming County project is “making sure small business can thrive here,” explained Terry Bartley, of the West Virginia Community Development Hub.

Grow Wyoming County organizers conducted three meetings last week — in Mullens, Oceana and Pineville. The Oceana meeting was conducted Tuesday. About 45 people attended, including business owners and area residents, according to Christy Laxton, county Economic Development Authority director.

Oceana has been hit especially hard recently with the closing announcements of longtime businesses Magic Mart and Hardee’s Restaurant along with Dixon’s Hardware. Oceana councilman Jared Harless said he is optimistic about things in Oceana. He noted that officials have been busy contacting other businesses and entrepreneurs in an effort to replace those closing. He said officials are within the “one yard line” of an agreement to replace Magic Mart, but didn’t offer any details.

“I think good days are ahead,” Harless told the group.

Similar meetings were conducted by the state Community Development Hub a couple of years ago. Participants were then asked to outline county assets and offer ideas of how to use those assets to develop the local economy.



*Dvon Duncan, a volunteer with Grow Wyoming County, talks with those attending the Oceana meeting Tuesday. Grow Wyoming County meetings were also conducted in Mullens and Pineville last week. The “citizen-led effort,” known as Energizing Entrepreneurial Communities, is designed to develop economic opportunities in the county, with assistance from the West Virginia Community Development Hub, by building on community assets and supporting small businesses. (Mary Catherine Brookes/The Wyoming County Report)*

This “citizen-led effort,” known as Energizing Entrepreneurial Communities (e2), is also designed to develop economic opportunities in the county, with assistance from the Community Development Hub, by building on community assets and supporting small businesses. The same E2C program is also being conducted in Grafton, Madison and Lincoln County.

Dvon Duncan, a volunteer with the program, outlined area assets that were previously identified as well as projects in which Oceana residents had shown interest, including a hospital or 24-hour medical facility, an ATV trail and trailhead center, water trails, a zip-line facility, overlook area, equestrian and mountain bike trails, locally-supported agriculture programs such as a farmer’s market, green spaces, among others. She noted that she has access to 25 high tunnel greenhouses that could be used by residents in support of a local farmer’s market. Those interested would need to complete grant applications, which is a lengthy process, she said.

Town officials said a weekly farmer’s market, held in Gilliland Park, is feasible for those who have produce products to sell. Bartley also provided an overview of the project. Laxton explained how the EDA works and the resources available to businesses.

The participants were then separated into teams that would be tasked with providing surveys to local businesses to determine their needs, meeting with the business owners concerning those needs, while the core team will provide assistance in connecting business owners with available resources.

The project will continue for the next year, Laxton said.

