



ENERGIZING ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITIES

A Pathway to Prosperity



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Boone County event brings “inspiration for the future of outdoor education”



This past June in Boone County, Bobby Miller, instructor at the Boone County Career and Technical Center, and high school students hosted the first Rivers and Ridges float event on the Little Coal River.

The students, part of the Adventure Tourism class at the school, got first hand experience running an event and seeing what a recreation based business looks like, running rivers floats all day near Water Ways Parks and the Little Coal River Campground. This project was part of The Hub’s Energizing Entrepreneurial Communities program and received funding through an Entrepreneurial Investment Mini-Grant. Project partners included entrepreneurs Meghan Roberts of Mountain Surf

Paddle Sports in Fayetteville, Evan Young of Appalachian Paddle Board Company in Teays Valley and Dain Bender from Little Coal River Camping and Kayaks in Boone Boone County, who provided boats and training support, as well as the Coal River Group in Tornado, WV.

Bobby Miller had this to say about their project:

“This gave our community a glimpse into how young entrepreneurs from Fayette and Teays Valley are making a business from paddle-sports. Dain Bender, from locally based business, Little Coal River Camping and Kayaks, also showcased a new startup river based tourism company. Meghan Roberts from Mountain Surf Paddlesports, Evan Young from Appalachian Boarding Company provided good models of how entrepreneurship can flourish at a relatively low startup cost. Forty-five boats or paddle boards made there way down the Little Coal, and not

only were students allowed to job shadow these professionals, they also learned valuable skills and a low cost form of recreational for a lifetime.

The partners that came to Rivers and Ridges were inspirations to the future of outdoor education in our region. The Department of Environmental Protection, Forks of Coal and many other volunteers from Boone County Schools were on hand to educate the participants of the need for safety in flatwater river sports and how to negate these risks. The importance of good stewardship and citizenship were also topics of discussion. The laws of boating on the river were introduced. Everyone had a great time.

Many of our students come into the Adventure Tourism program at the Boone Career Center without ever having learned to swim, some have an instilled fear of the water. We want everyone to be able to self rescue or rescue someone else, if needed. Fear of water is passed down and can be a detriment, learning to swim and how to remain safe on the water are important lessons. Like many of the activities we do in our classroom, such as caving, and climbing, we are building confidence, overcoming fears, improving communication and learning how to operate as an effective member of a team. CPR and First Aid are the first two certifications our students gain, while working towards wilderness first aid mastery.”

We hope the students not only learned valuable entrepreneurship and life skills, as well as a love for river recreation, but that this event can continue on into the future!

