



ENERGIZING ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITIES

A Pathway to Prosperity



Source: *The Logan Banner*, October 18 2017, provided by [The Hub](#)

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‘The Hub’ assisting Boone County cities, *by Phil Perry*



Phil Perry/Coal Valley News Dan Taylor, program coordinator for the West Virginia Hub is working with both the city of Madison and the town of Danville to provide resources to assist with community development.

MADISON - A West Virginia nonprofit organization has been helping municipal and community leaders throughout Boone County identify new ways to overcome some of the problems that plague cities throughout the region.

The West Virginia Community Development Hub assists with identifying problems, setting goals and connecting communities to a large network of resources.

Locally, The Hub has been working with leaders in Whitesville, Madison and now Danville. Program coordinator Dan Taylor, an Ashland, Kentucky, native and Marshall

University graduate, has been working in the city of Madison for over a year and said the city has been very proactive in its desire to secure economic growth and more recreational opportunities for citizens. He believes his community-based work in Huntington helped prepare him for what he is doing today.

"It led me to what I am doing today with The Hub," he said. "I was involved with a group there called "Create Huntington" and they host weekly forums for the community to come and express their ideas on how to improve the city. We held fundraisers which supported a grant program that was successful."

The Hub has a division that focuses on dilapidated buildings and it also focuses on community-based work. The Hub is grant funded and its work is geared toward communities that reach out for help or ones that have been identified as potential projects. Taylor has also been working in Lincoln and Wyoming county communities. For Boone County, The Hub is funded to work in the area for another two and a half years.

"I had only been through Boone county in passing prior to working here," Taylor said. "Initially we had heard a lot about the Boone County Development office and the good work they were doing, so we reached out to them. A community group called "Rev up Madison" was already in place and doing a lot of the things that we recommend for communities to be doing in terms of beautification, fixing up storefronts and the utilization of public art."

Madison City Councilwoman Carolyn Mullins, also a participant in Rev up Madison, gave Taylor a tour of Main Street.



"We (The Hub) were impressed with what was in place here," he said. "Madison has the beautiful old classic Main Street with wonderful architecture and unfortunately, many of the businesses have moved out and people have relocated from the city due to economic factors. We see this in communities around the state. We see the potential for Madison and we wanted to offer some assistance in fixing up some buildings, helping with business retention and attraction. We connect people with resources that they may not know are available to them."

Early on, Taylor heard about a group called "Authentic Adventures," which serves as a kayak and canoe rental business.

"They promote the Little Coal River as a place to come and enjoy," he said. "They've done a great job of attracting people to the area. We also are excited about the potential for a trail head opening with Hatfield-McCoy Trails and there is support work there that we can also assist with."

In Whitesville, the city is part of a program called "Turn This Town Around." Residents were able to vote online for their community to be chosen for the initiative and they were selected based on their votes. The Hub's Amanda Workman is working in that community.

"Much of what we do is based on matching up a program with a community that can best utilize those specific resources," he said. "Whitesville will be part of a program called 'Hubcap,' which focuses on downtown redevelopment."

Kaycie Stushek will be leading that program and a kickoff meeting will take place on Oct. 18.

"I'm excited about the work around the Little Coal River," Taylor said. "I have focused a lot on building up recreational tourism in the area. There is a cross country trail in the works behind Scott High School and this will not only allow meets to be held there for the school, but it will be something for the community to use. We had a mini-grant program where we were able to offer \$2,000 grants, so we were able to give one to the cross-country trail and we also gave one to support recreation on the river."

Locally, Joe Linville works with the Little Coal River Group in developing those initiatives. Lisa Dooley is the executive director for the West Virginia Municipal League in Charleston. She has worked with and recommended The Hub to various cities and towns.

"They are the professionals," she said at a town of Danville meeting. "They can identify problems and provide resources to help develop a plan."

Currently, The Hub is working with the city of Danville on the growing problem of neglected or abandoned properties within the city. The organization has offered free legal advice and financing options related to the legal demolition of abandoned properties that meet specific criteria. The Hub has offices in Charleston and Fairmont, but the Fairmont office will soon be relocated to Grafton. The non profit also works with local business owners and those looking to start a business. It offers free resources to assist with financial resources and can even help prospective entrepreneurs in scouting an area for a location to maximize their business.

Visit wvhub.org for more information or contact Dan Taylor at d.taylor@wvhub.org.

