



**2026 Fall Conference
Snowshoe Mountain Resort**

AGENDA

Wednesday, September 16, 2026

4:00 PM	Registration Opens	<i>Shavers Center</i>
5:00 PM	WVEDC Members Meeting	<i>Shavers Center</i>
6:00 – 7:30 PM	Opening Reception	<i>Corduroy Inn</i>

Thursday, September 17, 2026

Main Sessions take place at Shavers Center, Breakouts in Allegheny Springs

7:00 – 8:30 AM	Breakfast	<i>Shavers Center</i>
8:30 AM	Conference Opening and Welcomes • Dave Lieving, WVEDC • Ruthana Beezley, Greenbrier Valley EDC • Snowshoe Mountain Resort	
8:45 AM	Trailblazing Economic Growth: Outdoor Recreation in Action Hear firsthand how regional outdoor recreation initiatives are strengthening local economies and creating lasting community impact. • Josh Nease, Mon Forest Towns • Eric Lindberg, Snowshoe Highlands Area Ride Center (SHARC) • Matt Ford, Meadow River Valley Association • Sarah Elkins, Greenbrier Valley Off Road Biking Association • Moderator: Jessica Sutton, Brad and Alys Smith OEDC	
9:30 AM	WVSOM: Making the Greenbrier Valley Bio Hub a Reality Discover ongoing efforts to promote WV School of Osteopathic Medicine (WVSOM), the Greenbrier Valley and West Virginia as a destination for biomedical development. • James Nemitz, President, WVSOM • Don Smith, Associate VP, WVSOM • Bryan Brown, Executive Director, WV Bioscience Association	

Thursday, September 17, 2026

10:00 AM **Networking Break**

10:15 AM **Powering BR&E: Tech Tools to Enhance Business Retention**

Strategies for retaining and strengthening local businesses and technology tools including AI and VR.

- Aaron Brossoit, Golden Shovel

10:45 AM **Creative Capital Stacks and Rural Redevelopment: The Tygart Hotel**

Lessons on creative financing and rural redevelopment.

- Dave Clark, Executive Director, Woodlands Development

11:15 AM **Federal Partner Pop-Ups**

Hear from federal agencies on programs and initiatives focused on business and economic development.

- Ellen Heinz, US Economic Development Administration
- Jim Spencer, US Small Business Administration
- Elmo Rinaldi, US Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy
- Adam Kelly, US Department of Housing and Urban Development

11:45 AM **Lunch and Networking**

12:45 PM **Transition to Allegheny Springs for Break Out Sessions**

Thursday, September 17, 2026

1:00 PM &
1:30 PM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS: Each session is 20 minutes, providing a 10 minute break to transition to the next session.

A Powerful Tool in the EDA Toolbox: Property Transfers

Allegheny Springs - Tygart

Discover the legal flexibility and opportunities for EDAs to use property transfers to facilitate business projects and respond to business needs.

- Josh Jarrell, Spilman, Thomas & Battle

From Assessment to Action: Redeveloping Sites with WVDEP

Allegheny Springs - Greenbrier

Learn how WVDEP is helping communities identify, assess and position properties for productive reuse through assessment services & planning assistance.

- Jennifer Liddle, WV Department of Environmental Protection

Helping Agribusinesses Grow: Resources from WVDA and Beyond

Allegheny Springs - Williams

This session provides an overview of the WV Department of Ag Business Development Division, and other key agriculture resources.

- Ashley Butler, WV Department of Agriculture

2:00 PM &
2:30 PM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS: Each session is 20 minutes, providing a 10 minute break to transition to the next session.

Employee Ownership: Preserving Jobs, Building the Future

Allegheny Springs - Greenbrier

Learn how WVCEO is helping West Virginia businesses with succession planning and job retention through employee ownership.

- Tim Gibbons, WV Employee Ownership Center

What can you Share? FOIA, NDAs, & Economic Development Projects

Allegheny Springs - Tygart

Learn how to navigate the legal complexities of protecting proprietary business information while meeting public transparency obligations.

- John Stump, Steptoe & Johnson

Thursday, September 17, 2026

Building West Virginia's Outdoor Economy: The WV Outdoor Business & Industry Alliance

Allegheny Springs - Williams

This session will share the work underway to build the WV Outdoor Business & Industry Alliance (WV OBIA), a statewide effort focused on connecting outdoor businesses, resources, and partners to strengthen collaboration, identify industry needs, and create new opportunities for growth.

- Heidi Prior, Brad and Alys Smith OEDC

3:00 PM

Transition back to Shavers Center

3:15 PM

The Data Economy Story: West Virginia's Next Chapter

Update on the Data Economy Office's progress, upcoming strategic initiatives, and efforts to strengthen data center investment, and overall economic growth.

- Heather Vanater, Deputy Director

3:45 PM

Inspiring the Next Generation of Talent: Youth Workforce Development Programs

This panel will explore innovative programs that connect K-12 students with regional career pathways through hands-on experiences, interactive activities, and industry engagement.

- Tracey Valach, Nature's Mountain Playground
- Bill Shiflet, Willow Bend Agricultural Innovation Farm
- Monica Cross, Explore the New Manufacturing
- Tiffany Rogers-McClure, High Rocks
- Moderator: Dr. Bonny Copenhaver, New River Community & Technical College

4:30 PM

WVEDC Awards: Honorary Lifetime Members

Friday, September 18, 2026

All Friday events at the Shavers Center

7:00 – 8:30 AM

Breakfast

8:30 AM

Site Ready or Site Risk? Lessons from the Field

This panel will examine the technical, legal, and infrastructure issues that can help move a deal forward—or stop it in its tracks.

- Mike Basile, Managing Member, Spilman Thomas & Battle
- Chad Riley, Vice President of Business Development, Thrasher
- Ryan Taylor, CEO, Pickering Associates
- Moderator: Samantha Smith, WV Division of Economic Development

9:15 AM

Leveraging WVDOH Access Road Programs for Economic Growth

Learn how the West Virginia Division of Transportation's Industrial Access Road and Neighborhood Access Road Programs help unlock development opportunities.

- Jonathan Schaffer, WV Department of Transportation

9:45 AM

Networking Break

10:00 AM

Growing Success: Wood Industry Wins

Hear firsthand examples of how West Virginia's wood products sector is generating economic growth and supporting rural communities.

- Senator Robbie Morris, Randolph County Development Authority

10:30 AM

From Campus Closure to Economic Catalyst

Discover how a former university campus is being reimagined as the Innovation and Technology Center, with investments in education, housing and community infrastructure.

- Lindsey Piersol, Wood County EDA
- Taylor, Pickering Associates

11:00 AM

WV Department of Commerce Update

- Christine Davies, Deputy Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development & Workforce Participation

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