



**2026 Fall Conference
Snowshoe Mountain Resort**

AGENDA DRAFT

Wednesday, September 16, 2026

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|----------------|---|
| 12:00 PM | WVEDC Board of Directors Meeting |
| 4:00 PM | Registration Opens |
| 5:00 | WVEDC Members Meeting |
| 6:00 – 7:30 PM | Opening Reception |

Thursday, September 17, 2026

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|----------------|--|
| 7:30 – 8:30 AM | Breakfast |
| 8:30 AM | Conference Opening and Welcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dave Lieving, WVEDC• Ruthana Beezley, Greenbrier Valley EDC• Snowshoe Mountain Resort |
| 8:45 AM | Trailblazing Economic Growth: Outdoor Recreation in Action <p>Hear firsthand how regional outdoor recreation initiatives are strengthening local economies and creating lasting community impact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Josh Nease, Mon Forest Towns• Eric Lindberg, Snowshoe Highlands Area Ride Center (SHARC)• Matt Ford, Meadow River Valley Association• Clay Elkins, Greenbrier Valley Off Road Biking Association• Moderator: Jessica Sutton, WVU OEDC |
| 9:30 AM | WVSOM: Making the Greenbrier Valley Bio Hub a Reality <p>Discover ongoing efforts to promote WV School of Osteopathic Medicine (WVSOM), the Greenbrier Valley and West Virginia as a destination for biomedical development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• James Nemitz, President, WVSOM• Don Smith, Associate VP, WVSOM• Bryan Brown, Executive Director, WV Bioscience Association |

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.
11:45 AM	Lunch and Networking
1:00 PM & 1:30 PM	BREAKOUT SESSIONS A Powerful Tool in the EDA Toolbox: Property Transfers 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 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 This session provides an overview of the WV Department of Ag Business Development Division, and other key agriculture resources. • Ashley Amos, WV Department of Agriculture

2:00 PM &
2:30 PM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Employee Ownership: Preserving Jobs, Building the Future

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

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

- John Stump, Steptoe & Johnson

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

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, WVOEDC

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.

- Chris Morris, Director
- 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
- Sarah Riley, High Rocks

Friday, September 18, 2026

7:30 – 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, Spillman 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
- Dr. Torie Jackson, WVU Parkersburg

11:00 AM

WV Department of Economic Development Update

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

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