

Monday, January 18th

9:30-10:50am Working Group Meetings

Clean Energy, Food & Agriculture & Creative Placemaking working groups will meet separately. These sessions are open only to regular participants of the working groups.

11:00am-12:15pm Keynote

Coming Full Circle: The Often-Untold Stories of Central Appalachia

Join us for a session that highlights the stories of traditionally underrepresented groups of people in Appalachia's history. Too often Appalachia is portrayed in a way that ignores its diverse history and populations. Using the Appalachian tradition of storytelling, our guest speakers will share stories of our region's rich cultural history.

Equity Story Circle Breakouts

Participants will receive a brief overview of the story circle technique before participating in one of the story circle breakout sessions. Breakout rooms will focus on sharing stories and experiences related to equity.

12:30-1:30pm Open Space Sessions (concurrent)

Resiliency Through ReUse: Localizing Innovative Green Manufacturing and Upcycling in Appalachia led by Jacob Israel Hannah, Coalfield Development Corporation

The ReUse Corridor is a multi-state coalition of practitioners coordinating the collection, allocation, and transformation of landfill-destined materials in WV, OH, and KY. This emerging market sector has not only saved local businesses and communities thousands of dollars in waste management, but also strengthened and created new supply chains for innovative enterprises and organizations in Central Appalachia. This session will showcase some of the successes so far of our pilot program, as well as share some of the planning development for our overall regional strategy. After the presentation, we will hold space for our peer-to-peer discussion for any new/interested collaborators as well as for our preexisting teams to connect on 2021 goals and vision. This opportunity opens up the possibilities for innovative networking across multiple sectors, such as: Abandoned Mineland sites being transformed into reuse resource centers, reuse materials as a resource supply chain for creative placemaking needs, higher education systems composting integration, and much more! So, join us for an exciting and open conversation on reuse in central Appalachia, you won't be disappointed.

Clean Energy Sector Sessions (2:00-4:45pm)

2:00-2:50pm Concurrent Sessions

Clean Energy Finance Opportunities Adam Wells, Appalachian Voices and other members of finance team

This workshop session will begin with an overview of the current opportunities for innovative finance of solar/clean energy, with a focus on regional approaches. Specific opportunities that will be highlighted are the Solar Finance Fund and Invest Appalachia. Others may be added ahead of time, and there will be a call out during the session for other existing opportunities/new ideas/ emerging needs. Once everything is “put out on the table”, discussion will focus toward specific next steps, with an eye toward using CAN’s structure/resources to support ongoing/new/evolved efforts. The goal of the session is to leave with an updated understanding of how CAN partners efforts in this space can be mutually supportive, and what implementation on a regional level in 2021 can look like.

West Virginia’s Energy Future: Ramping Up Renewable Energy to Decrease Costs, Reduce Risks, and Strengthen Economic Opportunities for West Virginia Tim Cronin, Fellow, Center for Energy & Sustainable Development, West Virginia University College of Law

At the end of this tumultuous and historic year, WV’s electric utilities will publish plans showing the resources they intend to use to generate electricity for West Virginians over at least the next decade. Our electric utilities urgently need to consider a major ramping up of renewable energy and energy efficiency. Renewable energy is now cheap, and it’s continuing to get cheaper. Customers, businesses and individuals, overwhelmingly demand renewable energy. Diversifying our power resource mix is critical to competing in the growing regional renewable energy economy and securing a place in the 21st century energy economy. Major lenders and investors increasingly are withholding capital from utilities that aren’t transitioning away from emission-heavy resource mixes.

3:00-3:50pm

Clean Energy Policy Round-Up Adam Wells, Appalachian Voices; Carrie Ray, Mountain Association; Autumn Long, Solar United Neighbors; Cortney Piper, Tennessee Advanced Energy Business Council; Kelly Bragg, WV Office of Energy; Emmett Pepper, Energy Efficient WV

This session will offer an overview of current policy issues, campaigns, and initiatives being undertaken by members of the CAN Clean Energy Working Group. Session attendees will gain insight into the breadth and depth of policy work our Working Group members are undertaking in order to advance the region’s clean energy ecosystem. This session will be structured as a series of flash talks (5-10 minutes each) during which each panelist will report on a priority policy issue, project, or initiative for their organization. Some panelists have received funding for their work through the CAN Clean Energy Rapid Response Advocacy Mini-Grant Fund. Attendees will hear about how these funds are being deployed to support time-sensitive advocacy, public communications, and policy change efforts to advance and defend critical clean energy policies in Central Appalachian states. Additional panelists will round out the session in order to provide attendees with a sweeping overview of the range of clean energy policy developments in the region today.

4:00-4:45pm Clean Energy Track Wrap-Up Highlights and Next Steps

5:00-5:30pm Happy Hour and Appalachian Challenges Discussion

Tuesday, January 19th

Creative Placemaking Sector Session (9:00-11:45am)

9:00-9:50am Concurrent Sessions

Identity, Adaptability, and Collaboration: A field-based conversation about community-based Creative Placemaking in West Virginia. **Michael Tierney, Step by Step. Lauren Kemp, RenewAll. Melissa McKinney, The One Voice Project at STAGES Music School.**

This session will feature a few of the grantees from CAN's WV Creative Placemaking Peer-learning Cohort; they will share some of their successes, challenges, and open the floor for a discussion about how to move the work forward. Framed by the findings from the peer-learning cohort's field building report, the group will discuss engaging youth, finding creativity in unexpected places, and embedding racial justice into creative placemaking practice.

10:00-10:50am Concurrent Sessions

Let's Go Downtown! Ray Moeller, Northern Brownfield Assistance Center at WVU; Hannah Vargason, Natural Capital Investment Fund

We will provide an overview of the Downtown Appalachia Redevelopment Initiative program. Then present several key program highlights, including photos and impacts, followed by a project profile on the Downtown Appalachia contribution toward relocation of a community clinic in Bluefield, WV, driven by redevelopment of a historic downtown building in Bluefield. We will then provide an overview of the broader development of a "Rural Downtown Redevelopment Playbook."

11:00-11:45 Creative Placemaking Track Wrap-Up Highlights and Next Steps

12:00-1:00pm Open Space Sessions (concurrent)

Invest Appalachia Update Andrew Crosson, CEO, Invest Appalachia

Invest Appalachia is a collaborative regional investment fund that is designed to accelerate community-oriented investment into the region. Its analysis is informed by CAN, among other regional stakeholder groups, and the sector focus areas include CAN priorities such as Clean Energy, Food & Ag Systems, and Creative Placemaking. Since the IA open space session at the 2019 Convening, we are fully incorporated as an organization, have hired a CEO, and have contracted an Investment Manager. The CAN network and working groups are critical to IA's analysis and approach, so we want to share a series of updates and invite feedback on our focus and priorities for 2021 and beyond.

Shared Use Kitchens and COVID: The Value of Shared Spaces during the Pandemic Adam Kody, Food Enterprise Coordinator at the Appalachian Center for Economic Networks

We've known the value of having an inspected, well equipped food production facility to be shared by small business owners since we opened the doors to the Food Ventures Center in 1996. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, we were a shared space used by over 80 farmers, processors, restaurants, food trucks, and other food-based businesses. This session will provide a general overview of the Food Ventures Center at ACEnet in addition to discussing our response to the pandemic and how we have remained open for the entirety. Recognizing the vitality of our production space for so many local producers, ACEnet staff doubled down on all of our safety precautions. Additionally, our facility users had to buy in and do their part. By adopting a strategy of high-communication, high accountability for all facility users we were able to continue offering a safe workspace to so many businesses who had no other options.

Food & Agriculture Sector Sessions (2:00-4:45pm)

2:00-2:50pm

Healthy Food Access Project Flash Talks

3:00-3:50pm

Beginning Farmer Training & Responses to COVID-19 Alexis Close, Appalachian RC&D; others TBD

Many food and agriculture focused organizations in Appalachia run training programs for beginning farmers. These programs are often place specific, focusing on the needs of local farmers and locally available markets and resources. Covid-19 forced many programs to temporarily suspend operations or to quickly pivot to online training platforms. This has the potential for programs to reach farmers far outside of their traditional regional boundaries. As a vaccine begins to be distributed, there are still many unknowns for what training programs will look like through 2022. This session aims to facilitate a discussion between practitioners to share how training has changed during COVID-19, what the near future will look like, and what new practices they plan to keep utilizing for the long-term. This session will be an open discussion forum, with opening questions and prompts provided by a facilitator. Anyone affiliated with a training program or interested beginning farmer training is welcome to attend and share ideas.

4:00-4:45pm Food & Agriculture Track Wrap-Up Highlights and Next Steps

5:00-5:30pm No-Talent Talent Show

Join us for our first "No Talent" Show! This virtual happy hour will feature a twist on the typical formula and invites its performers to show off the areas in which they lack skill. So, break out that new instrument you swore you'd learn during lockdown, show off that "home improvement" project that just never took shape, and enjoy some drinks and frivolity to wrap up the Convening!