



*The WV Brownfield Awards recognize the hard work and achievements in brownfields redevelopment from across the state. These awards recognize individuals and communities who have made major contributions to the redevelopment of brownfields in West Virginia.*

## Community Engagement

The **2023 WV Brownfield Award in Community Engagement** recognizes partners or communities who have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to community engagement, working closely with communities to identify and implement redevelopment priorities. This year there are two recipients in this category: **the Community Advisory Board Members of the Black Diamond Redevelopment Project** and **the Shepherdstown Landfill to Library Project**.

### *Black Diamond Redevelopment Project*

Since 2019, Coalfield Development has been actively working to revitalize the Black Diamond property in the Westmoreland community of Huntington. This has included an environmental remediation of the property- supported by funding from the U.S. EPA and in collaboration with the WVDEP Voluntary Remediation Program. Coalfield is now leading a redevelopment of the property, which sat vacant for a number of years, through the U.S. Economic Development Administration's Build Back Better Regional Challenge.



Currently, the project is moving through architectural and engineering due diligence. Once complete, Coalfield anticipates two anchor tenants at the facility: Solar Holler - a full-service solar developer and installer for all of West Virginia and parts of Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, and Maryland; and the ReUse Corridor - a multi-state network of partners across Central Appalachia focused on recycling, up-cycling, and reclaiming various materials that would otherwise enter the consumer waste stream.

In collaboration with Solar Holler and ReUse, Black Diamond will become a hub for good jobs and community activity focused on renewable energy, conservation, and climate-resilient technologies.

Throughout the environmental remediation and redevelopment planning process, a group of committed residents and local partners met regularly with the Coalfield project team. This resulted in a project process informed and guided by community knowledge and priorities for the site. The Coalfield team is deeply grateful for the members of the community advisory board and for their time and effort. This award is a direct recognition of the community's role in making the project a reality.

## *Shepherdstown Landfill to Library Project*

The Shepherdstown Landfill to Library project transformed a municipal dump into a state-of-the-art, modern library serving the residents of the Town and Jefferson County. Sparked by a mini-grant from the Northern WV Brownfields Assistance Center (NBAC) and the Benedum Foundation, staff and volunteers developed a team led by Hali Taylor, Director of the Library. “The building has been in the works for 15 years,” Taylor said. “This has been a project with dozens of hands on deck.” In addition to support from the Library’s Board and volunteers with the Friends of Shepherdstown Library (FOSL), the Jefferson County Development Authority (JCDA), NBAC, and numerous other stakeholders contributed.



The JCDA received an EPA Cleanup Grant in 2012 to fund site remediation, and the site received a Certificate of Completion from the WV Voluntary Remediation Program in December 2014. Project leaders were committed to raising all of the funding for this project to better serve the residents of Jefferson County through a capital campaign, rather than taking on a debt. Working with designers and architects to develop construction drawings and cost estimates, fundraising to build an ADA-accessible library began in 2012. Over the next decade, the team raised \$4.4 million, primarily from private donors, to cover the entire cost of construction for the library.

From start to finish, project leads involved the community in creative ways. From community visioning sessions to imagine the new space to creative celebrations of project milestones, including a “Brownbreaking” to celebrate the start of site remediation, project leads involved a broad array of stakeholders in every step of the process. This helped the project to maintain momentum, continue to raise funds from donors, and use the project to build community in a town steeped in a history of public involvement and collaboration.

In May 2022, construction of the new Shepherdstown Public Library was completed, and the grand opening ceremony was held that July. The new library was designed as a one-level, 8,900-square-foot facility comprised of large open areas dedicated to children and youth programming on one side and adult programming on the other. The new library includes a large commons room used as a community meeting space, a media lab for creative podcasters, a quiet reading room where patrons can study local history and genealogy, and a STEAM lab for young adults to participate in coding and robotics.

The new building has provided significant upgrades and an expansion of catalogs, as well as new meeting spaces for community-building. New opportunities continue to sprout, with a campaign to build a community garden hosting native pollinator-friendly plants underway. The Shepherdstown Public Library serves as an inspiration to residents and stakeholders across the state who want to envision what is possible in their own communities.

This project brought the library board and staff, the community, and volunteers together to commit to a vision that created a new community landmark. The municipality, who donated the site for reuse, the county development authority, who agreed to take ownership for site remediation, and the US EPA and WVDEP, who saw the potential of this project, helped to bring the community together to bring this project to fruition.

## Economic Development

The **2023 WV Brownfield Award in Economic Development** recognizes a project or community partner that has demonstrated excellence in economic development on one or more brownfield sites. This year's recipient is **Eileen Johnson of the Hampshire County Economic Development Authority (HCDA)**.

A native of Weirton, WV, located in the heart of West Virginia's 'steel valley,' Eileen Johnson gained an early understanding of the economic and environmental impact that brownfield redevelopment could have on a community. From Johnson's childhood, she carried a permanent sense of responsibility for community and involvement.

Johnson received her Bachelor of Science in Industrial Personnel Psychology/Business Administration from Fairmont State College and a Master Degree in Labor Relations with Emphasis in Collective Bargaining/Arbitration from West Virginia University. Following Johnson's tenure with Apria Healthcare, she relocated to Hampshire County with her husband Ken. Here, she began working as the City Administrator for Romney, WV where she remained from 2006-2015. During this time, she was responsible for the administration and operations of the city's government and services. She directly facilitated or assisted in numerous infrastructure and community development projects valued at over \$20 million. In 2015, Johnson began working as the Executive Director of the Hampshire County Development Authority.



As the Executive Director, Johnson was responsible for facilitating economic growth through business recruitment, relocation, and expansion, and job creation. In her capacity as director, she partnered with the HCDA, County Commission, and the WV Brownfields Assistance Center to develop a project that repurposed the former Hampshire Memorial Hospital into a revitalized elementary school. After years of partnership with numerous government, local, and regional partners, the project is now near completion.

Johnson, retired as of June 2023, now resides in Bloomery, WV.

## Local Leadership

The **2023 Local Leadership Award** recognizes a neighborhood, city, or county leader with a strong commitment to brownfield redevelopment. This year's recipient is **Jim "Cork" Bowen of the Paden City Development Authority**.

The Paden City Development Authority (PCDA) is a small, volunteer, government entity in the City of Paden City, WV. It was created by the City Council in 1989 to promote and facilitate business development. Jim "Cork" Bowen has served as the President of the PCDA since 2015. In addition to Bowen, there are eight other members on the Authority: Chuck First (Vice President), Ken Stead, Rich Wright, Dan Gonzales, Kelly Sine, Bill Bell, Tom Martin, and Gary Cardelein.

The authority's relationship with the WV Brownfields Assistance Center began in early 2018 with a site visit from both the center and EPA Region 3 officials. They toured the Paden City Industrial Park, which once housed Paden City Pottery and later the Corning Glass Works, which closed in 1991.



Within twelve months of the site visit, the 8.6 acre Industrial Park's potential was realized. During this time, both Phase I and Phase II Environmental Assessments were conducted. In early 2021, the PCDA was awarded an EPA Brownfields Technical Assistance Grant that enables the PCDA to conduct a market analysis. This analysis surveyed West Virginia and nearby regions to assess feasibility of the park's future reuse. The goal of this assessment was to compare current assets with prospective tenants to identify viable redevelopment options.

In July 2021, the PCDA was awarded an EPA Clean-up Grant to focus on remediation of the property to attract potential tenants identified during the market analysis. Recently, the site was remediated with over 45,000 square feet being demolished due to the condition of the remaining kilns on site. The PCDA is now in the process of encouraging prospective tenants or buyers to utilize the open concrete pad and to consider the construction of new structures on the site. In 2022, the PCDA was the recipient of an EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant to focus on the evaluation of properties in town with redevelopment prospects.

Through Bowen's exemplary leadership, the PCDA is focusing on the assessment, remediation, and redevelopment of five sites in city limits, the former Industrial Park, and the Paden City Park. As the President of the Paden City Development Authority, Bowen commends the efforts of all PCDA members who volunteer their time and effort to the revitalization of the city. Further, he thanks Joe Nowak, an EPA Region 3 Brownfield and Revitalization Branch official, and the WV Brownfields Assistance Center for help in restoring Paden City's employment prospects.

## **Redevelopment Partner**

The **2023 Redevelopment Partner Award** recognizes an individual, organization, agency, or other institution that has demonstrated a strong commitment to brownfield redevelopment and worked closely with the Brownfields Assistance Centers to facilitate redevelopment across the state. This year's recipient is **Andrew Davis of the New River Gorge Regional Development Authority (NRGRDA)**.

Andrew Davis grew up in the Appalachian Foothills and Piedmont regions of Georgia where he developed an appreciation for combining outdoor adventures with his educational and social pursuits. After visiting West Virginia as a teenager, he returned to train as a whitewater rafting guide in the New River Gorge in between semesters at Georgia College and State University where he earned a degree in Environmental Sciences. Non-profit work and two years of AmeriCorps VISTA service in Southern West Virginia sharpened his interests in civic engagement and collaborative planning. This left him to pursue a graduate degree in Municipal Sustainability at Indiana University. Davis returned to West Virginia in 2019 to focus on community and economic development across the state.



In his capacity as Director of Strategic Redevelopment for NRGRDA, Davis coordinates environmental remediation grants for community and economic development efforts within the counties of Fayette, Nicholas, Raleigh, and Summers. Current projects include redevelopment of a former industrial site, downtown commercial spaces, inactive landfills, and abandoned railroad corridors. He regularly collaborates with elected leaders, civic groups, nonprofits, economic development professionals, university employees, local businesses, and volunteers to plan programs, projects, and special events aimed at improving people's experiences with the built and natural environments of the New River Gorge region. "Living and working in West Virginia allows me to combine my passions for sharing its tremendous outdoor treasures and its many opportunities to attract more residents and create more jobs," said Davis.