

https://www.journal-news.net/journal-news/development-authority-pivots-to-strategic-partnership-focus-in-hopes-of-better-meeting-the-growing-panhandles/article_185b4b63-c3e0-587b-841b-e1eeb8742e40.html

Development Authority pivots to strategic partnership focus in hopes of better meeting the growing panhandle's needs

By Breanna Francis bfrancis@journal-news.net

Apr 28, 2021



Hamilton

MARTINSBURG — Pivoting some of its focus from bringing new industry into the Eastern Panhandle and supporting existing business in the area, the Berkeley County Development Authority is prioritizing making meaningful impacts on area infrastructure to help build a better, brighter future for the region.

According to Sandy Hamilton, executive director of the Berkeley County Development Authority, the organization has always supported community organizations and businesses but found recently it has been focusing more of its efforts on strategic planning, particularly infrastructure needs.

“More and more we have found that we need to focus on building strategic partnerships, not only within the county but the region and the state, to better meet our economic development goals to move forward,” Hamilton said. “In the past we have had a primary focus on purchasing and selling property, bringing new business into the County and helping local business grow and, while that is still a focus, we want to be mindful that we need to be directly involved with improving local infrastructure, transportation and education because it is critical to the overall economic health of our region.”



The advertisement features a central illustration of a man with long dark hair, wearing a dark blue t-shirt, playing a bright blue electric guitar. He has his right arm raised in a celebratory gesture. The background is a deep red, and several broken chains in shades of orange and white are scattered around him, symbolizing breaking through barriers. In the top right corner of the image area, there are small icons for a play button and a close button.

Make Breakthroughs On Guitar

Tom Hess Music Corp

[Open >](#)

Hamilton said whereas, in the past, these areas were on the sidelines of their focus, the Development Authority has found it is critical to look at the bigger picture and assess the needs of the region, as land and space for development is a finite resource and the people and businesses of Berkeley County need support in several avenues aside from where and when to develop.

In order to do this, Hamilton said the Authority has found several ways to diversify and partner with entities to see how the Authority and its resources can best be used to promote responsible, balanced growth in Berkeley County.



Martinsburg PFAS Claims



Suffering Adverse Health Effects from PFAS Contamination? Call Skinner Law Firm for Help.



“I see us moving forward and being even more strategic than we have ever been before,” Hamilton said. “It’s a little bit of a shift for us but it’s going to really strengthen our region.”

According to Hamilton, the Authority has already made steps toward achieving this broader goal including partnership with Omnitrix, the rail company that acquired the Winchester and Western railroad that runs through the County, as well as the local water and sewer departments. Hamilton said all of these organizations play a vital role in what types of business and industry are best suited to go in certain parts of the region.

In addition, Hamilton said the Authority has also strengthened its partnership with area schools, as she explained a well-trained and educated workforce, that meets business needs, is vital to a healthy and growing region.

Just a few weeks ago, the Development Authority and the Berkeley County Schools system announced a partnership, that connects graduating seniors who have opted to pursue a career directly out of high school rather than attending college, with local employers.

