

ANNUAL

REPORT

2024



400 W. STEPHEN ST., MARTINSBURG, WV 25401



BERKELEY COUNTY COMMISSION



BERKELEY COUNTY

is West Virginia's second oldest county, and is governed by a five-member County Commission. The five Commissioners are elected to six-year terms of office. The Commission President is the presiding officer of the board at meetings and hearings. Each member of the Berkeley County Commission must be elected from a different Magisterial District of Berkeley County. There are six Magisterial Districts in the County. The Berkeley County Commission was known as the Berkeley County Council from January 1, 2011 until June 30, 2023.

Commission Responsibilities

- Generating revenues to fund the county's capital and operating budgets as well as other county departments and agencies.
- Own and maintain county property.
- Lay and disburse county levies based on assessed property values.
- Providing for the general public health, safety and welfare of Berkeley County residents and visitors.
- Adopting various orders, ordinances and regulations as authorized by the West Virginia Legislature.
- Act as the Board of Review and Equalization to consider appeals of property values for assessment of property values.
- Act as the Board of Canvassers in review of election results and certification of the election.
- Appoint members of County boards, authorities and public service districts.
- Appoint Fiduciary Commissioners to oversee and settle certain estates.

Commission Meetings

Regular meetings of the County Commission are scheduled weekly and are held in the Commission Chambers, 400 W. Stephen St., Suite 205, Martinsburg, WV 25401. The public can view the sessions of the County Commission in-person and online via multiple social media platforms, including YouTube and Facebook.

Residents can subscribe on the County website -

<https://berkeleywv.org/> - to receive public meeting notices, agendas and other information at no charge, via email.

Meetings and meeting agendas are published in advance at <https://berkeleywv.org/>

MEMBERS OF THE BERKELEY COUNTY COMMISSION

COMMISSION PRESIDENT JAMES P. WHITACRE

is a lifelong resident of Berkeley County and resides in the Martinsburg area. He is a graduate of Martinsburg High School and attended Shepherd University. Jim has worked as a contractor/excavator since 1982. Reelected in 2020, he is currently serving his second, six-year term.



COMMISSION VICE PRESIDENT G. EDGAR "EDDIE" GOCHENOUR

is a lifelong resident of Berkeley County and resides in Gerrardstown. He is a graduate of Musselman High School and attended Shepherd University. Elected in 2020, he is serving his first six-year term. A retired fire chief, Gochenour also served as the director of the Berkeley County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.



COMMISSIONER JAMES R. BARNHART

is a longtime resident of Berkeley County and resides in the Martinsburg area. He is a graduate of Hedgesville High School and West Virginia University. He is retired from the Berkeley County Health Department. Reelected in 2018, he is serving his second, six-year term.



COMMISSIONER R. STEPHEN (STEVE) CATLETT

is a lifelong resident of Berkeley County, and lives in Hedgesville. A graduate of Hedgesville High School and the University of Richmond, Steve retired as executive director of the Martinsburg-Berkeley County Parks & Recreation Board after 45 years of service. He was elected to a six-year term in 2022.



COMMISSIONER H.D. BOYD

is a lifelong resident of Berkeley County and resides in Martinsburg. A business owner, H.D. is a graduate of Hedgesville High School and West Virginia University. H.D. served on the Martinsburg City Council from 2014 to 2016. He was elected to an unexpired term on the County Commission in 2022.



WELCOME FROM COMMISSION PRESIDENT

JAMES P. WHITACRE

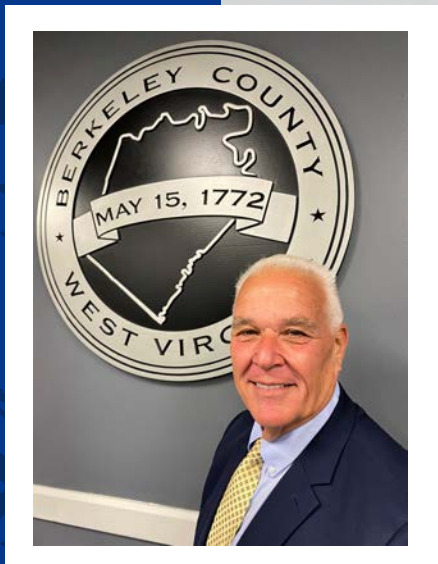
As President of the Berkeley County Commission, you can be proud of the progress over this past year to make Berkeley County a great place to live. As outlined in this report, County leaders continue to make Quality of Life and Quality of Public Service initiatives a top priority as we work together to identify and develop new parks and recreation sites, and improve our county government facilities, among other projects. Berkeley County continues to be a great place to be. As our community grows, we grow with it.

Please take the time to review this report. We welcome your feedback!

Sincerely,



James P. Whitacre
Commission President



BUDGET/FINANCE

Levy Rate

Approved County Levy Rate of 13.39 for the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year, which began on July 1, 2024. The Levy Rate has remained at the same level or has been reduced by the County Commission, for seven consecutive years.

County Budget

2024-2025 Budget Estimate of \$51,044,496 includes funding for 68 uniformed law enforcement positions, 22 paid firefighters, as well as allocations requested by the County constitutional officers, departments, offices and various agencies.

County Audit

Completed Fiscal Year 2023 Audit with zero findings.

2024 TAX LEVY RATES BERKELEY COUNTY, W.VA.

Arden, Falling Waters, Gerrardstown, Hedgesville, Hedgesville Town, Martinsburg, Mill Creek, Opequon Districts				
TAX CLASS - Rural Districts	I	II	III	IV
State Current	.0025	.0050	.0100	
County Current	.1339	.2678	.5356	
School Current	.1940	.3880	.7760	
School Excess Levy	.2250	.4500	.9000	
School Bond	.0582	.1164	.2328	
Total Rural Districts Rate Per \$100 Assessment	.6136	1.2272	2.4544	
TAX CLASS - Municipal Districts	I	II	III	IV
Town of Hedgesville				
State, County, School Rate	.6136	1.2272		2.4544
Municipal Rate	.0578	.1156		.2312
Total Town of Hedgesville Rate per \$100 Assessment	.6714	1.3428		2.6856
City of Martinsburg				
State, County, School Rate	.6136	1.2272		2.4544
Municipal Rate	.1186	.2372		.4744
Excess Levy	.0525	.1050		.2100
Total City of Martinsburg Rate Per \$100 Assessment	.7847	1.5694		3.1388



FIRST RESPONDERS

Law Enforcement

Adopted county budget for the 2024-2025 fiscal year that fully funds 68 full-time law enforcement deputies for Law Enforcement Division of the Berkeley County Sheriff's Office.

Awarded \$517,103 in grants, including funds for Crisis Intervention Team (\$400,000), School Resource Officer (\$19,750), Evidence Equipment (\$17,353) and SWAT and Diving Underwater drones (\$80,000). A STOP School Violence grant of \$1,000,000 was jointly awarded to the Sheriff's Office and Berkeley County Day Report Center for employees, training, equipment and consultant.





Emergency Management

Awarded grant funding for radios (\$125,000), light towers with generators (\$50,000), LED message boards (\$40,000), hosting of HAZMAT IQ training courses for the region (\$54,000) and reimbursement grants for operations (\$68,697).

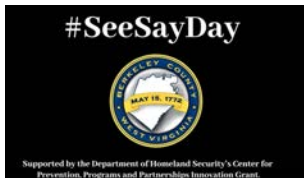
House on Wheels Fire Safety Program presented to more than 3,300 school-age children at 25 public and private schools in collaboration with Berkeley County Fire Department and Martinsburg Fire Department.



Initiated Commodity Flow Study for highways and railways in the County in ongoing development of plans for emergency situations.

Collaborated with Berkeley County Schools, law enforcement and other partners to present various safety and emergency preparation classes and programs for schools and the community at-large, including Safety Awareness Training, Basic Family Emergency Preparedness, Active Shooter Preparedness and Stop the Bleed.

Participated in regional exercises to practice planning and skill development and to identify areas of improvement as part of effort to enhance ability to carry out mission of prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery.



See Something, Say Something Awareness video produced through federal grant funding in collaboration with Berkeley County Schools, Berkeley County Sheriff's Office and Berkeley County Office of Strategic Planning & Communications.

Emergency Communications

"Triple ACE" accredited agency, the Berkeley County Department of Emergency Communications is the primary answering point for 911 calls requesting emergency assistance from residents and visitors of Berkeley County. The department's emergency communicators answered more than 175,000 emergency and non-emergency calls annually.





Fire Department

Funding is allocated for 22 paid firefighters stationed with the five volunteer fire companies of Berkeley County: Back Creek Valley Volunteer Fire Company, Baker Heights Volunteer Fire Department, Bedington Volunteer Fire Department, Hedgesville Volunteer Fire Company and South Berkeley Volunteer Fire Company.

Berkeley County Fire is the designated Region III West Virginia Hazardous Materials Regional Response Team. The team is comprised of firefighters trained to handle hazardous material-involved incidents, providing services to eight eastern West Virginia counties.

Department responded to 2,183 calls in Fiscal Year 2023-2024, including structure fires, motor vehicle accidents, rescues and extrications, hazardous materials incidents, swift water rescue calls, and medic assists.

House on Wheels Fire Safety Program presented to more than 3,300 school-age children at 25 public and private schools in collaboration with Martinsburg Fire Department and Berkeley County Office of Emergency Management.

Participated in Career Days for middle and high school students.

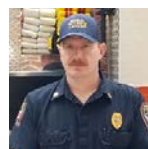
Berkeley County Fire Department



Chief Martin Roberts



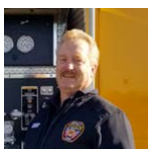
Lt. Steven Shawyer II



Lt. Justin Shank



Lt. Jeremy Taylor



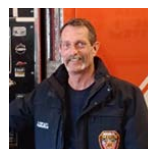
FF Tommy Newcomb



FF Daniel Petry



FF Frank Petry



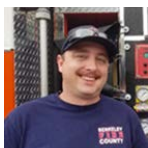
FF Thomas Presley



FF Bradley Crowell



FF Andy Martin



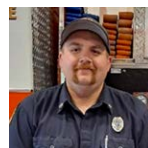
FF Joseph Fato



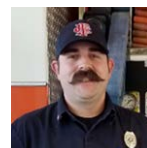
FF Aaron Files



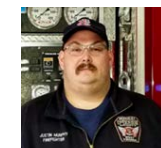
FF Thomas Gorman



FF Timothy Siebel



FF Jared Waugh



FF Justin Murphy



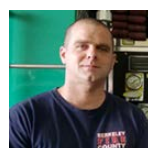
FF Zackery Markley



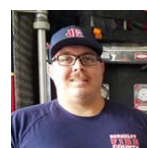
FF John Graham



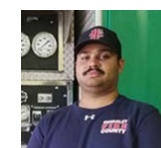
FF Brian Dehaven



FF Adam Mauck



FF Zachary Younker



FF Jalen Heslen

COURTHOUSE

Judicial Center

■ Grants: Awarded \$58,257 for purchase of radios, courtroom door barricade sticks and duty belts

Public Visitation: 116,567; Inmates, 2,369



Transportation Service:

Berkeley County Court Marshals provided transportation for

Arraignments	448
Court-ordered travel	76
Juveniles	34
Mental hygiene	79
Special operations	5
*Total trips:	642
	(66,766 miles)

**Transportation initiative launched in first half of 2023 to maximize availability of county sheriff's deputies for patrol and other core law enforcement function in collaboration with the Berkeley County Sheriff's Office, Berkeley County Prosecuting Attorney's Office and State of West Virginia.*

Comfort Dog: A golden doodle began serving as a therapy/comfort dog for children and other vulnerable individuals while they are in the Berkeley County Judicial Center. Raya Sunshine, the first therapy/comfort dog to be used in West Virginia's court system, is named in honor and memory of the late Berkeley County Lt. Deputy Court Marshal Ernie "Sunshine" Reed. An initiative of 23rd Judicial Circuit Judge R. Steven Redding, the placement of a therapy/comfort dog at the judicial center was endorsed by the Berkeley County Commission.



Public Access Buildings & Grounds

Completed relocation of Berkeley County Assessor's Office, Berkeley County Emergency Ambulance Authority, Berkeley County Fire Service Board and Wills & Estates (Office of Fiduciary Supervisor) as part of project to build addition and renovate 42,000 square feet of the Administration Annex of the County Courthouse. Renovations also will provide space for remaining divisions of Berkeley County Clerk's Office to relocate from 100 W. King St., in second half of 2024.



Energy Conservation

Courthouse (Judicial Center) and Administration annex buildings earned ENERGY STAR designations for 2023. Installation of an ice-enhanced chiller plant helped net a 33 percent decrease in energy consumption after the chiller plant and replacement high efficient boilers went online for the 100,987 square-foot building. The chiller plant and high efficient boiler technology also was installed for the 121,600 square foot courthouse building. Comprehensive energy-saving LED lighting project also completed. Built for production of woolen goods that began in the 1890s, the two historic mill buildings are part of the Berkeley County Courthouse complex located in the 300, 400 and 500 blocks of South Raleigh Street in Martinsburg.



Anti-Litter Public Service Campaign

Production of public service announcements discouraging littering produced and launched in the third quarter of 2023 thanks to sponsorship by the Berkeley County Commission. The anti-littering campaign includes "The Crying Mountaineer," a new interpretation of the 1970s Keep America Beautiful advertisement, The Crying Indian. Volunteer assistance and contributions for the video shoot were received from the Berkeley County Solid Waste Authority (BCSWA) and Hedgesville, W.Va., resident Tim Williams, an 18th century craftsman. The video was filmed by SC Studios, which was retained earlier this year to provide video production services for Berkeley County.



COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

Day Report Center

Awarded grant funding for staffing (\$930,203), including Peer Recovery Coach and CATALIST program positions.

Construction of 19,175 square foot addition, and 400 square foot renovation to Day Report Center (DRC) advanced toward projected completion in 4th Quarter of 2024.

48 DRC Participants Graduated.

Conducted 23,814 Drug Screens.



Recovery Services

QRT

Doors Knocked 235
Survivors Reached 92
Families Reached 37
Survivors Accepted Services 48%

JOTIPP

Awarded grant funding for Staffing (\$1.3 Million) and Peer Coaches (\$80,000).

Substance Abuse Prevention Curriculum Presented in 8 schools.

3,623 Students Engaged

Home Confinement

\$2,538,550 Incarceration Cost Avoidance



Roadside Litter - Community Service

Litter vacuum to expedite the collection of roadside litter was purchased in the first quarter of 2024 thanks to \$27,680 donation received from Berkeley Community Pride, Inc., a county beautification-focused nonprofit organization. The Madvac vacuum is five times faster than picking up litter via the traditional method.



ROADSIDE LITTER PROGRAM *at a glance*

Litter Pickup (bags) 1,098	Total since June 1, 2018 =	10,940
Other/Bulky items 466	Total since June 1, 2018 =	7,015
Miles: 81	Total since June 1, 2018 =	1,270



From June 2018 through May 2024, 357 roll off Apple Valley Waste containers of solid waste was collected through roadside and stream cleanup programs, totaling 889,736 pounds of waste. Total weight does not include tires or recyclables handled by the Berkeley County Solid Waste Authority.

QUALITY OF LIFE/ PARKS & RECREATION

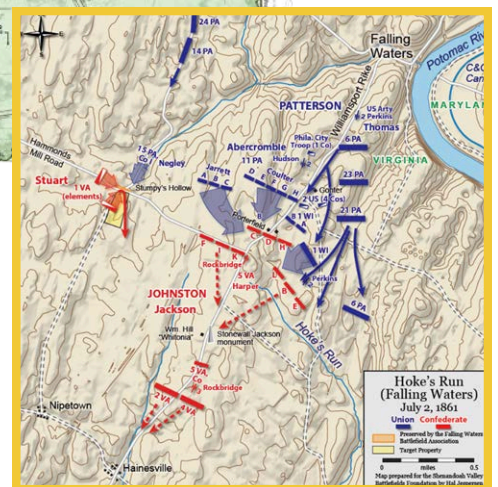
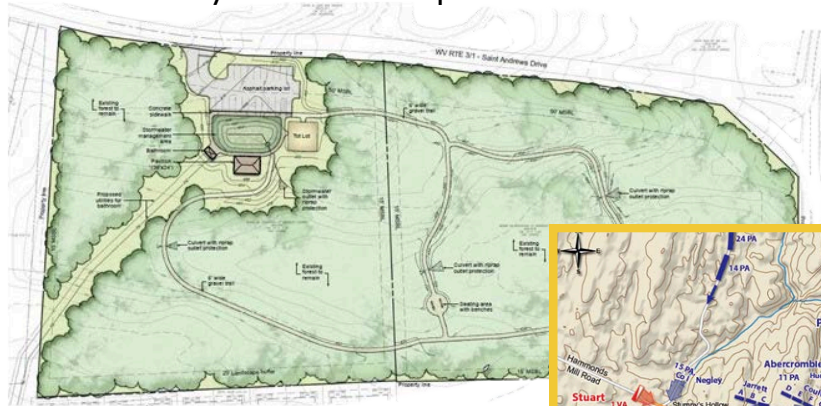
Charlotte Prather Park



Approved Memorandum of Understanding to support Berkeley County Board of Education with planned improvements at Baker Field, home for the Martinsburg High School Softball program and Martinsburg Fastpitch Softball, Inc. Partnered with City of Martinsburg and Board of Education to fund paving and striping of parking lot for park and related stormwater improvements, as well as improvement of vehicle access and pavement of walking trail to the adjoining P.O. Faulkner Park where parking lot also was paved.

Hoke's Run Battlefield Park

The Berkeley County Commission and the Martinsburg-Berkeley County Parks & Recreation Board partnered with the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation to establish Hoke's Run Battlefield Park, the County's first Civil War park.



Inwood Park

Future recreation site near Musselman High School expanded to more than 31 acres with purchase of 8.2-acre parcel in Fall 2023. Project also awarded \$1,125,000 in federal Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) in the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget and County Commission authorized financing to launch project development. New park site is located in the vicinity of the historic site of "Inwood

Park," a community gathering place established in 1890s along the Cumberland Valley Railroad (now Winchester & Western Railroad).

Pickleball Courts

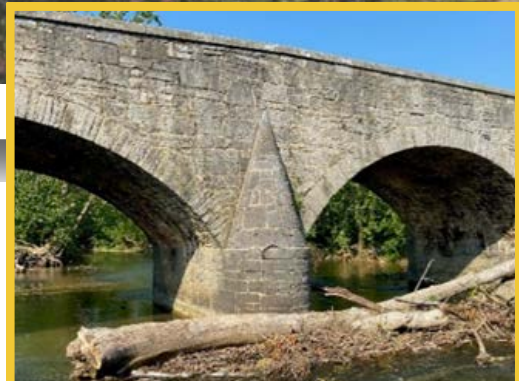
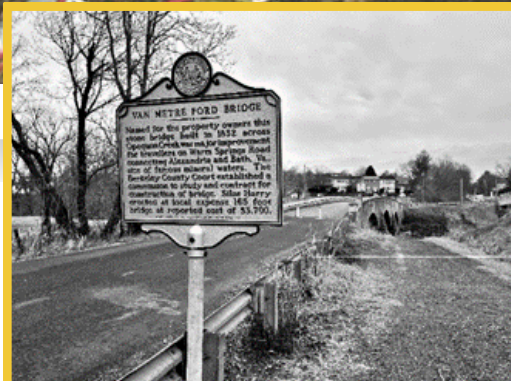
Approved development of acreage in August 2023 for construction of eight pickleball courts on county property at 770 Baltimore Street in collaboration with City of Martinsburg and Martinsburg-Berkeley County Parks & Recreation Board. The project next to Oatesdale Park was funded/awarded by the City

of Martinsburg to Lantz Construction Co. of Winchester, Va. for \$290,280.60 in April 2024.



Stone Bridge Park

Approved agreement with West Virginia Division of Natural Resources for creation of a park at the Stone Bridge public access site along Opequon Creek east of Martinsburg. Agreement allows for improvements such as trail development and creating outdoor classroom areas in support of wildlife and fisheries education at approximately 6.5-acre site. The DNR separately reaffirmed commitment to building a boat slip at the Stone Bridge site to improve recreational access to the creek.



ARTS, CULTURE & HISTORY

.....

Museum Commission: First meeting of the Berkeley County Museum Commission held on August 17, 2023. The Museum Commission was created to advise the Berkeley County Commission on development of a regional culture and history museum for Eastern West Virginia and encourage collaboration in promotion of history education and historic preservation.

BerkeleyWV 250 Legacy

County Flag: A project of the Berkeley County 250th Commemoration Steering Committee, the County Flag was adopted by the Berkeley County Commission on December 7, 2023. Design concept by James Rumsey Technical Institute (Berkeley Springs High School) student Branden Pindell.



Symbols: Gold and Blue are official colors of West Virginia, with stars representing Berkeley County's six magisterial districts and blue bands representing two municipalities in the County, Martinsburg and Hedgesville. Six loosely clustered stars represent the mountainous ranges of Warm Springs Ridge, and Blue Ridge Mountain, within which the County was originally bound when it was carved from Frederick County in 1772 in the Shenandoah Valley.

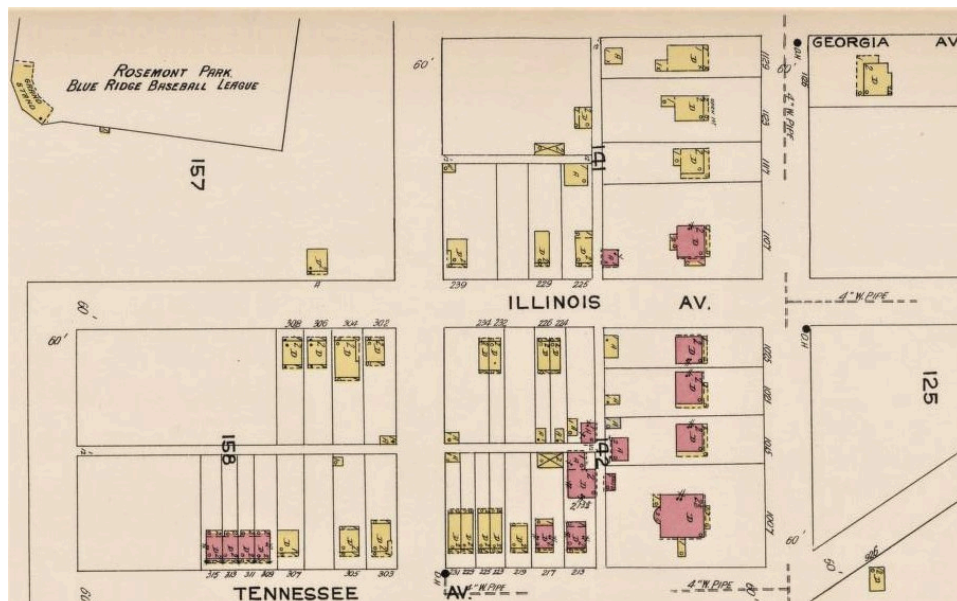


Park Benches: Placed first two of eight BerkeleyWV250 Legacy benches in Poor House Farm Park and Rooney Park in June 2024. The quality of life project was funded by the Berkeley County 250th Commemoration Steering Committee in collaboration with MRB Foundation and Martinsburg-Berkeley County Parks & Recreation.

History Mural: Dedicated on June 27, 2023, the “Roots and Horizons” public art project by the Berkeley County 250th Commemoration Steering Committee was in collaboration with MRB Foundation, Leisure LLC, Martinsburg-Berkeley County Convention & Visitors Bureau, and artist Lea Craigie-Marshall. The seven, 100-square foot mural panels were installed at 301 E. Stephen St., along the Frog Hollow Recreation Trail in Martinsburg.



Historical Marker: Received approval in June 2023 from West Virginia Department of Arts Culture & History of new marker recognizing the historic site of Rosemont Park in Martinsburg where Major League Baseball Hall of Famers Hack Wilson and Lefty Grove began their professional careers and the Martinsburg Blue Sox of the Blue Ridge League won multiple league titles in the 1920s. Funding for the marker was provided by the Martinsburg-Berkeley County Convention & Visitors Bureau.

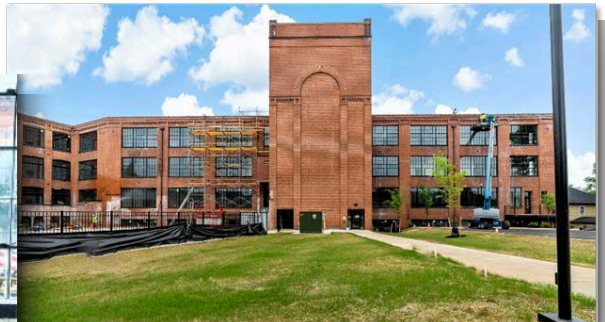


ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



■ **Treplar:** State and county officials announce \$50 million investment to establish a state-of-the-art food packaging facility in Berkeley County. Treplar, a joint venture of Klarpet of Turkey, and Triton International Enterprises of Woodbridge, Va., announced intentions to create 600 jobs in the manufacture of eco-friendly food packaging materials. The manufacturing facility was projected to expand from 140,000 square feet to 365,000 square feet.

■ **The Monument Companies:** First phase of \$100 million renovation of the historic Interwoven Mills complex for nearly 400 apartments and 5,000 square feet of commercial space completed in the second quarter of 2024. Project made possible by tax incentive package in collaboration with the City of Martinsburg and Berkeley County Development Authority and developer Monument Companies of Richmond, Va.



Community and economic development leaders toured first phase renovations to the historic Interwoven Mills complex at Porter Avenue and West King Street in Martinsburg in May 2024.

■ **Tax Increment Financing:** Two Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts were created in December 2023 by order of the Berkeley County Commission in coordination with the Berkeley County Development Authority, and with assistance received from the Berkeley County Assessor's Office, Berkeley County IT Department and the Office of the Berkeley County Administrator. Growth in property taxes created by new economic activity in the TIF districts can be used for public infrastructure such as utility, transportation and other improvements, reducing the financial impact on taxpayers countywide.

Engineering, Building Permits & Planning



2021 Total Permits: 2,882; Fees Collected \$1,667,632

2022 Total Permits, 3,055; Fees Collected \$2,323,686

Project	Acreage	Approval
ARDEN		
Project Green	30.00	04/15/24
Total	30.00	
FALLING WATERS		
CMC Steel WV - Phase 1	19.00	08/21/23
Wagner's Outdoor Express RV	3.12	05/06/24
Total	22.12	
GERRARDSTOWN		
Dollar General - Glengary	2	12/18/2023
Total	2.00	
HEDGESVILLE		
Stonecrest PUD - Lot C-7	1.24	10/02/23
Heritage Storage at Rock Cliff	1.70	01/02/24
Dollar General - Hedgesville	1.93	01/16/24
Leachate Treatment Plant Upgrade	0.70	06/17/24
Total	5.57	
MILL CREEK		
PLK - Inwood	1.06	07/17/23
Butler's Crossing - Outparcels 4 & 5	4.91	08/21/23
Specks Run Substation	3.00	12/18/23
Bunker Hill WTP	2.80	02/05/24
Total	11.77	
OPEQUON		
Vision Group Ventures	17.40	07/17/23
APM Residences	16.00	10/02/23
Caliber Collision	2.40	12/18/23
Baker Heights Garage - BCPSSD	3.42	4/1/2024
Total	39.22	
COUNTY-WIDE TOTALS	110.68	

Health Department: Awarded \$1.9 Million project to Lantz Construction Co. for expansion and alteration of the Berkeley County Health Department in May 2024. Project is in response to growth of the County. Project funding included \$608,000 Community Development Block Grant obtained by the County Commission, and additional allocation of \$168,028 in general county funds. Architect is Crabtree, Rohrbaugh & Associates.



BERKELEY COUNTY COMMISSION IN PHOTOS



CONNECT WITH BERKELEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT

About Berkeley County

Located at the northern gateway to the Shenandoah Valley, Berkeley County, West Virginia is the state's fastest growing County and second-largest by population. Approximately 70 miles from Washington, D.C., Berkeley County is in the eastern region of The Mountain State, adjacent to Western Maryland and Northern Virginia.

In transition from a rural to suburban area, Berkeley County is comprised of 321 square miles. The current population estimate for the County is 132,440.

Berkeley County was created on May 15, 1772 by an act of the Virginia House of Burgesses from neighboring Frederick County, Virginia. The County was named in honor of Norborne Berkeley, Baron de Botetourt, Royal Governor of Virginia.

Revolutionary War Gen. Adam Stephen, the County's first sheriff, laid out what became the County seat along Tuscarora Creek and named it Martinsburg in honor of his friend, Colonel Thomas Bryan Martin. The current population estimate for Martinsburg is 18,935.

Since the arrival of the earliest colonial settlers in the 1720s, Berkeley County has been at the epicenter of engagement, growth and community.



BerkeleyWV.org

Berkeley County Commission
400 West Stephen Street, Suite 201
Martinsburg, WV 25401
Phone: 304-264-1923 | Fax: 304-267-5049



NOTIFY ME!®

Looking for public notices?

Searching for
bid opportunities?

Want to come work for
Berkeley County?

Interested in knowing more about
Berkeley County's agencies, boards
and commissions?



Scan the QR code below or go to
www.berkeleywv.org/list.aspx
and subscribe with an email address to
receive job recruitment postings,
public alerts, meeting notices and more!



Credit: Prepared by the Berkeley County Office of Strategic Planning & Communications for the Berkeley County Commission in collaboration with the Office of the County Administrator, Berkeley County Day Report Center, Berkeley County Department of Court Security, Berkeley County Department of Emergency Communications, Berkeley County Department of Home Confinement, Berkeley County Facilities Department, Berkeley County Office of Emergency Management, Berkeley County Engineering Department, Berkeley County Planning Department and Berkeley County Recovery Resource Center.