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Extension planning leadership conference

September 20, 2012

From staff reports , The Herald-Star

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MORGANTOWN - The West Virginia University Extension Service is planning a conference focusing on community leadership and development as a result of the recent shale-related economic boom to take place Oct. 4-5 at Waterfront Place Hotel in Morgantown.

The Community Resource Leadership Academy, hosted by the WVU Extension Service's Community Resources and Economic Development program, can help emerging and established leaders understand and develop their community assets effectively, according to officials.

The conference theme, "Harnessing Energy for Development," was inspired by the recent Marcellus shale boom and its economic effects on rural communities. Sponsored by Chesapeake Energy and the West Virginia Oil and Natural Gas Association, the conference will provide sessions relating to rural development, leadership styles, local economy, management and other topics.

The leadership academy is intended for community leaders such as chamber of commerce members, economic development authorities, business owners, Main Street associations and city and county officials. Participants can choose from three tracks to customize their conference experience - economics, facilitation or leadership, according to officials.

"This is an important topic for local community development initiatives associated with the oil and gas boom" said Norm Schwertfeger, WVU Extension Agent in Brooke County. "The conference will be a great networking event also and includes a special culinary tour of some of Morgantown's fine restaurants."

Conference attendees will hear presentations from nationally recognized speakers as well as WVU faculty. Keynote speaker will be Luther Snow, a community practitioner known for his work in positive group collaboration. Other presenters include Scott Rotruck, vice president of corporate development and state government relations for Chesapeake Energy Corp.; Ted Boettner, executive director of the West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy; Don Reinke of the Monongalia County Development Authority; Kent Spellman of the West Virginia Community Development HUB; and WVU Extension and Public Administration faculty.

A culinary tour of downtown Morgantown is planned and will be similar to a progressive dinner. The walking tour will showcase the flavors of local restaurants and allow diners to experience the downtown area, officials said.

Detailed information, including the conference schedule and registration information, is available at www.crla-wv.org.

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