

Region VII meets in Buckhannon

By GARY MALLONEE
Staff Writer

Region VII Planning and Development Council conducted its quarterly meeting in a newly renovated conference room at its offices in Buckhannon.

The freshly finished conference room is larger, more comfortable and provides more technology capabilities. The new facility will be available for council members to use as a central location within the region to conduct meetings.

The meeting was called to order by Region VII Chairman Donnie Tenney with the pledge of allegiance recited and introductions made of those present.

Three presentations were given by members of the West Virginia Wesleyan College Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE), Stonewall Resort Chef Dale Hawkins and Mike Masterman of Extreme Endeavors.

SIFE team members discussed the recent West Virginia Go Green Convention on the Wesleyan campus on Feb. 21, which was partially funded by a grant through Region VII.

The six-hour event attracted more than 600 visitors. The presentation showed the importance of the Go Green Convention and the impact it would have on the community. Members said they are planning their second convention for next year and thanked Region VII for its support.

Hawkins spoke briefly on the importance of locally grown produce. West Virginia used to grow almost all of its produce, he said, but now around 97 percent of produce is brought into the state. Offering fresh, locally grown produce may have an impact on tourism in the

state, Hawkins said. Local farmers could organize markets and use other avenues to make a big impact with fresh produce available for consumers, he said.

Masterman, who specializes in technology and equipment suitable to work in adverse conditions, spoke briefly on technology that could better the lives of future generations.

As an example, Masterman said generators don't always do the job in the event of an emergency; if there is no gasoline, generators don't operate.

Different energy sources are needed, which would include solar and wind powers, to help support the grid, he said. This has to be done on the local, national and international level to come up with new ways of doing things.

Region VII Executive Director Rosemary Wagner told members of her recent trip to Washington, D.C., for a DDNA/NADO Policy Summit. She said it was an informative trip and those who attended received worthwhile information. Tenney also attended the summit.

Wagner advised counties affected by flooding last summer to submit their information and request for special funding from the FEMA Disaster Declaration 08. Every county in the region, except Randolph and Upshur, are eligible for the funding.

In other business, the council members:

- Approved the 2007-2008 audit report.

- Approved the 2009-2010 budget.
- Approved a resolution to support the completion of Corridor H.

The next meeting will be the annual picnic on June 22. The place and time will be announced at a later date.