

Re-Imagine Butler County

JANUARY 2020



PHOTOS FROM BUTLER HARVEST SOLAR BUS TOUR

LEFT: FRANKFERD FARMS, CENTER: SALLY'S CIDER PRESS, RIGHT: LUTHERLYN RESIDENCE

Year End Update

In September of 2018 about 80 people interested in creating a sustainable Butler County spent a day at Butler Community College envisioning the future. Since then a planning committee of Re-Imagine Butler County has been working toward making that vision a reality. The following is a recap of what has been done to date. The work of moving towards a sustainable future is at an important crossroads and needs the input and involvement of more people to continue the momentum and achievements that have been accomplished within the past year.

There is much to report on the progress that has been made with the goals set forth at the initial kick-off meeting. The envisioning process that day produced the following key topics: Renewable Energy Sources; Recreation, Trails and Tourism; Building Renovation; Sustainable Education; Agriculture Development and Food Access; Water Management; and Environment Restoration.

The three areas of strongest community interest that emerged as goals were as follows:

1. Renewable Energy Resources (especially solar), 2. Recreation/Trails and Tourism and 3. Sustainable Agriculture/Food Systems. It was decided by Re-Imagine Butler County to initially focus on Renewable Energy (Solar Energy) Resources.

Beginning with an initial focus on renewable energy, Re-Imagine Butler County has been proactively engaged with community leaders and local businesses to join together to advance Butler County into a sustainable future. We have been very involved throughout the county by hosting meetings where municipal leaders, small businesses, and homeowners could interact with sustainability experts and government agencies geared towards providing solutions and products to ensure a sustainable future and enhance job opportunities for Butler County.



- 3 MAIN INTEREST AREAS
- RENEWABLE ENERGY
 - RECREATION/TRAILS/TOURISM
 - SUSTAINABLE AGR/FOOD SYSTEMS

Mission:
Re-Imagine Butler County is a group of citizens concerned about the future of Butler County. Our purpose is to provide public forums to stimulate community action to achieve a sustainable future for our county and future generations.

Municipal Meeting - May 30, 2019



Photo left: Mario Leone. Monaca Borough Manager discusses how their solar installation is saving energy for his borough.

Photo right: Henry McKay, SUN PA Program Director enumerates the benefits of going solar for residents at Adams Ridge Meeting.



June 6, 2019 - Homeowners Meeting at Adams Ridge

This meeting was one of several planned around the region for the Beaver-Butler Solar Co-op, a program run by Solar United Neighbors (SUN) in partnership with Re-Imagine Butler County, Marcellus Outreach Butler, the Sustainable Enterprise Accelerator, RiverWise, and the League of Women Voters of PA.

Henry McKay, Pennsylvania Program Director of SUN, delivered a presentation on residential solar systems. He outlined how the co-op can help make it easier for participants to go solar through the co-op's residential group buying power in dealing with solar installers.

Forty households have joined the co-op and two have already signed contracts to go solar with the co-op. More education is needed to help homeowners realize the benefits and cost savings of going solar.

The following is a recap of our work in the past year and a half.

Strategic Energy Management for Your Municipality

Re-Imagine Butler County worked in partnership with SolBridge, government agencies and non-profits to present the latest information on how to improve municipal policies and practices to successfully address issues of sustainability.

Speakers included Jim Price, Community Manager at Sustainable Pittsburgh, Geoff Bristow, Regional Energy Program Manager for the PA Department of Environmental Resources (PADEP), Mario Leone, Borough Manager for the Borough of Monaca (case history), Patricia DeMarco, Forest Hills Council (case history), Zaheen Hussain,

Millvale Sustainability Coordinator (case history), Greg Winks and Will Brown, SolBridge Energy Advisors LLC, Alanna Colvin, Technical Advisor for PA Technical Assistance Program (PennTAP), and Annie Regan, Clean Energy Pittsburgh Program Manager.

Three municipal case histories (Monaca, Forest Hills and Millvale) were presented to help inform other municipalities about how sustainable and renewable energy solutions were implemented in their townships to improve energy efficiency, and ultimately help their municipalities save money on their energy bills.

Presentations included valuable resources that can help municipalities save on energy costs through energy assessments and other energy programs available to help meet their goals for energy efficiency and cost savings for their municipalities.



Lutherlyn: Solar Tour participants with solar installation in background.

Butler Harvest Solar Tour

On October 5, 2019 interested Butler area small business owners and homeowners participated in a Solar Bus Tour visiting solar installations throughout Butler County. Participants met with actual solar owners and businesses to have their questions answered and were guided by a knowledgeable solar expert who provided information on how to go solar at their own home or business.

Solar-powered tour sites included a home, a cider press (Sally's Cider Press), a summer camp (Lutherlyn), and a farm (Frankferd Farms). Participants were also invited to an after-tour gathering where other solar homeowners and solar experts were available to answer questions about how solar is benefiting them.

Re-Imagine Butler County worked for months with Henry McKay from the non-profit, Solar United Neighbors (SUN) of Pennsylvania to organize this guided bus tour, highlighting the positive impacts of solar energy in Western Pennsylvania. The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania and GoGreen Festival co-sponsored the event with EIS Solar, Groundhog Solar, and North Country Brewing. (See photos from front page). Seven news articles were generated about the Butler Harvest Solar Tour in local and regional media including: Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Cranberry Eagle, Ellwood City Ledger, Butler Radio, Butler Eagle pre-tour, Butler Eagle post-tour and Post Gazette Editorial.