



# Indiana County Sustainable Economic Development Task Force Monthly Newsletter

## Soft Opening for Hoodlebug Extension Scheduled Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>

*The construction of the Indian County Multi-modal Corridor, otherwise known as the Hoodlebug Trail Extension, is nearly complete.*

With Borough of Indiana's accompanying work on site, the once barren asphalt surface of the 8th St. Lot has been transformed into a hub of multi-modal activity. Historically, the space was designed with considerations to traditional automobile transportation only. For those of you who missed previous articles on the site, the new features of the redesigned lot will include:

- Green infrastructure to manage stormwater runoff and beautify the space
- A sheltered and illuminated bike parking structure powered by solar energy
- Car stoppers made from recycled plastics
- An Electric Vehicle (EV) charging station (accommodates two vehicles at a time)
- An additional six parking spaces, two dedicated for the EV station, and four handicap spaces



Josh Krug, Deputy Director of the Indiana County Office of Planning & Development, has worked with this project for six years. When asked about the importance of this project, he explained that this trail extension was a small piece in a much larger, regional effort to improve connectivity to and within existing trail systems. "This extension of the Hoodlebug Trail connects downtown Indiana to a greater known regional network called the Trans Allegheny Trails. It will provide recreation, transportation, and economic development opportunities for Indiana County."

To commemorate the completion of the project, a brief "Soft Opening" event is scheduled for Friday November 8th, starting at 12 noon and ending around 12:30 pm. The Grand Opening of the trail extension will take place in Spring 2020.



## YOU'RE INVITED! Indiana County Celebrates Solar

*A casual happy hour to celebrate the conclusion of the Indiana County Solar Co-op*

**Where:** The Banquet Room at The Coney, 642 Philadelphia St, Indiana, PA 15701

**When:** Wednesday, November 13th from 6-8pm

Join us and celebrate all of the newly-minted solar homeowners and solar advocates created by the Indiana County Solar Co-op! We'll share photos of each other's installations, learn about the achievements of the co-op, and talk about what's next for the solar movement in Indiana County and beyond. Solar United Neighbors will provide appetizers and drinks can be purchased from the bar. Friends and family are welcome to join, especially those curious about going solar themselves.

**RSVP today at:** <https://tinyurl.com/y5y5qeq8>



For more information, visit:  
[SustainableIndianaCounty.org](http://SustainableIndianaCounty.org)



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# Summit III, “Reinventing Rural America” Sparks Further Discussions on Internet Access

*Presentations on sustainable agriculture practices, land restoration, economic development, green buildings, and rural broadband highlight ways our community can grow stronger.*

On Friday, October 4th, the Task Force gathered together at Rustic Lodge for their third annual Summit. This year’s theme, “Reinventing Rural America”, encouraged attendees and speakers to consider what needs to be changed to ensure the resiliency of rural communities. The morning began with a presentation and panel from the Task Force and its Focus Group leaders. Task Force volunteers shared the progress our organization has made in the past year, and what the Indiana Community has accomplished. In a survey conducted at the event, one anonymous attendee stated that “There are talented young people working on Sustainable Development in Indiana County. That gives me hope.”

***“There are talented young people working on Sustainable Development in Indiana County. That gives me hope.”***

The panel of the Task Force was followed by Keynote speaker Emily Rhodes, who educated the audience on how changes in the coal economy are impacting communities, and how the Just Transitions Fund has assisted in stabilizing those economies. Speakers Matt Mahoney from the Keystone Energy Efficiency Alliance (KEEA), and Greg Winks and Will Brown from Solbridge Energy Advisors taught the audience about sustainable energy practices and renewable energy. Mahoney’s message focused on the message that energy efficiency is just as beneficial to a home-owner’s wallet as it is to the environment, and how his organization has worked to make financing efficiency projects possible.

## Indiana County Solar Tour Held October 13<sup>th</sup> at H.B. Culpeppers

On Saturday October 13th, a group of residents from all around Indiana County joined the Task Force for a National Solar Tour event. Citizens road in vans visiting local homeowners who have opted to go solar. The group was joined by solar installers Richard Flarend from Groundhog Solar LLC (Altoona) and Bryan Rosatti from Green Solar Systems LLC (Greensburg). Russ Leap from Leap’s Farm (Penn Run), also joined the group to share how he has used solar to power his farm and grist mill.

The advisors from Solbridge Energy shared different ways solar energy has been adopted in Pennsylvania, and different financing options for solar installations available to consumers. Joey James from Downstream Strategies shared examples of successful land restoration projects taking place in communities similar to Indiana, and Mother Earth Farms taught the audience about their organic farming practices, and fascinated listeners with stories on children (willingly!) eating raw vegetables that they had harvested themselves.

Based on the results of surveys conducted at the event, Rural Broadband was objectively the most popular issue of the day. Attendees were intrigued but not surprised to learn that the research of Dr. Sascha Meinrath of PennState found that the median download speed for Indiana County is 4.71 Mbps, as opposed to the 25Mbps reported by FCC. Meinrath explained that misreported bandwidth can affect a community’s ability to receive grant money to improve service. This sparked conversations about the importance of Internet access for economic development, employment, and education. Supporting efforts to improve broadband access in Indiana County is one of five executive recommendation outlined in the 2018 Report of the Task Force.

***Want to see the presentations for yourself? To see slides from each speaker’s presentation, visit [SustainableIndianaCounty.org](http://SustainableIndianaCounty.org). To watch the live footage of each guest speaker, visit our Facebook page @ICSEDTaskForce.***



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