



2/27/2023

Dear Partners, Supporters, and Friends,

2023 marks the eight year anniversary for one of our strongest programs: Refresh Appalachia. Refresh Appalachia is a program of Coalfield Development focused on developing, shaping, and supporting the regenerative and sustainable agriculture sector in Central Appalachia. Over the past year, the Senior Director of Agriculture (Adam Hudson), our Chief Program Officer (Marilyn Wrenn), the entire Refresh team, and many community/regional partners have been working to refine our agriculture strategy. We've learned a lot these past eight years, and we're more committed than ever to innovation in the agriculture space. Any farmer will tell you, ag is a tough business. It's also a vital business. Given recent supply chain crises, the rising cost of healthy food, deepening inequality throughout Appalachian food deserts, and the agricultural industry's significant climate impacts, we are convinced this crucial sector required innovation and equitable investment. Refresh Appalachia can lead the way.

In 2019, Coalfield made the strategic decision to shift our agricultural-focused enterprise, Refresh Appalachia LLC, to our **Program and Sector** team for additional development as a nonprofit project. This reduced the pressure on Refresh Appalachia to generate sales and allowed its leadership more flexibility to work with colleague organizations across the region on complex systemic issues. We also doubled down on Refresh Appalachia's ability to conduct workforce training, which is a major goal for Coalfield, overall. In fact, as a nonprofit program, Refresh Appalachia has gained momentum in several areas and has:

- Trained over 100 people
- Generated over \$15 million in agricultural investment
- Engaged and supported over 100 agricultural producers and entrepreneurs

During the pandemic, the flexibility of Refresh Appalachia was displayed as it quickly transitioned to provide fresh, healthy food to underserved communities; deepening our understanding of the significant unmet needs there. We learned that solving this problem continues to require strategic collaboration among many organizations, and strong relationships with state and federal agencies as there are many factors to consider.

As a nonprofit program, Refresh Appalachia also deepened engagement with the Central Appalachian Network's (CAN's) Food and Agriculture working group, and Senior Director, Adam Hudson serves as this working group's co-chair. Through multiple conversations with these nonprofit partners from across the region, we have determined that the most strategic role for Refresh is to serve as a logistics coordinator and aggregation and distribution (A/D) hub at the WestEdge Factory in Huntington, WV. As such, our facility there has added cold and dry storage capacity beyond its own needs to serve local farm businesses, and is helping these businesses, in turn, to reach lucrative markets.



Most recently, Refresh Appalachia worked to distribute local agricultural products to Wayne and Cabell County Schools in WV. While not profitable for a business to undertake at the early adoption stages, it is well within Refresh's mission as a nonprofit to build capacity within the system by supplementing routes, experimenting with new practices, and making connections in order to increase the overall viability and efficiency within the food system. However, Farm to School (F2S) is quickly demonstrating its potential to generate income, as evidenced by the number of producers who are supplying product for the F2S market. These producers, by utilizing Refresh Appalachia as a distributor, are supporting the viability of the food hub, which in turn increases the viability of the market itself by being able to lower costs and increase profits.

We appreciate the continued support of our community and philanthropic partners as we do our part to rebuild the Appalachian economy from the ground up. Our commitment to creating a sustainable local food system has never been greater, and we are excited about our successes. Please follow our work on Facebook and Instagram @refreshappalachia to learn more, and we would be happy to provide additional information or tours of our facilities.

Best regards,

Brandon, Adam, Marilyn and the entire Coalfield/Refresh team