

I participated in the Launch of the
**Appalachian Teaching and
Leadership Network**

**On July 27, 2012
(See Attachment)**

The next meeting is scheduled for
October 24, 2012

To learn more about this ATLN
go to the link below:

www.apptln.com

ATLN Launch Event

Over 100 of Eastern Kentucky's prominent educational, business, political and civic leaders gathered at the Knott Branch of Hazard Community and Technical College on Friday, July 27th to launch the Appalachian Teaching and Leadership Network (ATLN).

The innovative organization is fostering a spirit of collaboration to bring together the region's education and business communities in order to efficiently use resources to raise educational levels and support economic development in thirteen counties in the Central Kentucky Coalfield.

The service area includes the 20 K-12 school districts, two P-16 Councils (Big Sandy and Kentucky River), two community college service areas (Big Sandy Community and Technical College and Hazard Community and Technical College). Elements of two regional universities (EKU and Morehead State) will also be affiliated with the organization as will two private institutions (Alice Lloyd College and the University of Pikeville). The Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative (KVEC) will serve as the host agency for the initiative.

The ATLN will work with all K-12 school districts in the region to focus efforts, drive innovation, work toward efficiencies and significantly increase the percentage of students who graduate from college and are career ready.

Colleges and universities will help the network develop a comprehensive plan that connects K-12 education to higher education, to workplace opportunities and economic development. Business and industry leaders, as well as local and state government, will also play an active role in the network's success. ATLN will engage entire communities by connecting business and organizations to students in the classroom.

The organization will build academic programming to serve the needs of businesses while preparing students and communities for the global economy. It will also research and promote awareness of jobs and the necessary education and skills for the work.

Community leaders from a broad cross-section of role groups including State and Local Government, Business and Industry, Education, and Civic Organizations attended Friday's event in Hindman. Those individuals set goals and charted innovative strategies for raising educational levels and enhancing our region's workforce.

Gene Wilhoit, a national leader in education and key architect of the movement toward a more rigorous and internationally competitive academic curriculum, was the keynote speaker on Friday.

Wilhoit, director of the Council of Chief State School Officers and former Kentucky Commissioner of Education, addressed the challenges in preparing college and workforce ready citizens in the 21st Century with a specific focus on rural and Appalachian communities.

“It is our responsibility to make sure every child who walks across the stage to get a high school diploma in Kentucky is prepared for the next level of education,” Wilhoit informed the audience. “We have to make sure they are college and career ready.”

The former Education Commissioner also encouraged educators to try to new things and embrace technology and the pivotal role it can play in a child’s success. He also told the crowd of the importance of what he called the Early Warning System in our schools. “We have to pay closer attention to students who have fallen behind academically.”

“In Kentucky, it is our goal to make education a community value,” said Education and Workforce Development Cabinet Secretary Joseph U. Meyer. “The success of our communities and the prosperity of the Commonwealth is dependent upon the education and skill of our workforce. In order to prepare our students for success in high-wage, high-demand careers, we must rally local support and collaboration among business, education, workforce and economic development leaders. I applaud the Appalachian Teaching and Leadership Network for making this effort and look forward to reaping the many benefits this project will produce.”

Communication and marketing will be an important endeavor said Ron Daley, chairperson of the ATLN strategic planning workgroup. We will create and implement a communication plan promoting the value of education and K-20 best practices in education in the region.

Wilhoit, who praised those who are putting the Appalachian Teaching and Leadership Network into motion, has agreed to serve as Honorary Co-Chairman of the ATLN executive committee along with Governor Paul Patton.