



# COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR THE ALLEGHENIES

SERVING BEDFORD, CAMBRIA, SOMERSET, AND INDIANA COUNTIES

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For Immediate Release

Contact: Communications Officer Kecia Bal  
(814) 208-8394 / [kbal@cfalleghenies.org](mailto:kbal@cfalleghenies.org)

## **Donation to CFA to Erase Vacant Eyesores, Dangerous Structures in Johnstown**

JOHNSTOWN—Community Foundation for the Alleghenies is awarding \$657,000 in funding to launch a major project to tackle long-blighted properties and eyesores in three key areas of Johnstown.

Within the next year, at least 50 blighted structures will be razed in Prospect, Kernville, and Hornerstown, including the blighted buildings sometimes referred to as the box houses along William Penn Avenue in Prospect. Those structures, which have been a source of frustration for locals for years, will be torn down and replaced with an urban fruit orchard spanning over 2 acres.

In addition to work in Prospect, blighted structures singled out for their high visibility and dangerous conditions will be removed from high-traffic areas of the Kernville and Hornerstown neighborhoods of Johnstown.

The Johnstown Redevelopment Authority will carry out the blight removal, building upon ongoing efforts to clear Johnstown's blight and reinvigorate neighborhoods. The funding was made available through a private donation to the Foundation's Fund for the Future, a fund set up to address evolving community needs.

"The Fund for the Future is designed as a restricted endowment to support community priorities forever, but donors may also provide support to the fund to address urgent needs immediately," CFA President Mike Kane said. "This incredible support advances our community's fight against blight in a transformational way. People are really going to see a difference, and we hope this visibility will grow our community's positive momentum. Because of the great intentions of this private donor and the flexibility of vehicles like our Fund for the Future, the Community Foundation is able to make connections that make things happen."

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*Benefiting our region every day, forever.* Community Foundation for the Alleghenies is a public, nonprofit foundation that manages funds to strengthen communities in Bedford, Cambria, Indiana, and Somerset counties. CFA empowers individuals to become philanthropists, donors to make meaningful change, and caring citizens to design a legacy. For information about creating a fund or contributing to one of the 740+ funds the Foundation manages, visit [www.cfalleghenies.org](http://www.cfalleghenies.org).

In addition to removing the blighted properties, the JRA will seed the vacant lots with a mixture of low growth bluegrass and clover, ornamental grasses, and three-rail wooden fences along lot fronts. For the Prospect houses, JRA is working with the Cambria County Conservation District, as well as Penn State Extension, to engage neighbors in stewardship of the orchard.

CFA Associate Director Angie Berzonski said the Johnstown Redevelopment Authority (JRA) has made significant strides in combatting blight, which was a high priority for the donor.

“This will be the third community gateway blight demolition project that we’ve partnered on with JRA,” she said. “In each of the previous cases, they’ve over-delivered in results, improving more properties than their original estimate.”

JRA Executive Director Melissa Komar said the funding will allow the Johnstown Redevelopment Authority’s mission to remove blight along key gateways to make tremendous progress in 2020.

“The impact of this level of blight removal will be palpable, and it proves that members of our community are invested in making Johnstown’s future an utmost priority,” she said. “This support addresses a vital issue.”

Kane added that the Fund for the Future provides ideal opportunities to work with donors to address changing needs in the Greater Johnstown region, and he anticipates that more projects funded through this uniquely flexible fund will be announced in 2020. More information is available at [cfalleghenies.org/thefundforthefuture](http://cfalleghenies.org/thefundforthefuture).

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