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**MACED Becomes Mountain Association**

**BEREA, Kentucky (August 3, 2020)** — After more than 40 years, the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development (MACED) is changing its name to the Mountain Association in an effort to be more inclusive and welcoming to the people and communities they serve.

The community economic development nonprofit has worked to advance a just transition to a new economy in Eastern Kentucky and Central Appalachia since it was established in 1976. Over the course of 2019, the organization took a deep dive into understanding the history of Appalachia, the current state of society, and what a better future could look like. They developed a [new strategic plan](https://mtassociation.org/publications/)with goals to guide their work over the next five years. This plan includes deepening their commitment to equity and inclusion, and a name change is a big part of that work.

“We wanted to express our commitment to a new beginning and an outward-facing presence that is more inclusive and welcoming,” Mountain Association President Peter Hille said. “We know the value of MACED’s legacy and name recognition, but we have known for a long time that the acronym was hard to say and often confusing. In fact, if you search for “MACED” online, in addition to our website you find videos of protesters being “maced” by police – an act with which we do not wish to be associated.”

Along with this change, the Mountain Association has made significant updates in their communications with a new look and a new website. This comes after working with Berea College students to complete a third-party equity audit of their external communications.

Through a variety of communications assessments, the students analyzed the old website and physical materials to determine the reading level and ease of readability. The new website has taken heed of their recommendations, reducing the number of words per sentence and using plain language as much as possible. The Mountain Association worked with [P&P Creative](https://pandpbrands.com/), a communications firm based in Mount Sterling, who designed their new brand, new website, messaging and materials.

Hille said all the work in the Mountain Association’s new plan and communications, and in deepening their commitment to equity, has prepared them for the truly unique, historic moment of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has caused unprecedented impact on lives and economies, coupled with the new energy around the Black Lives Matter movement and justice for the oppressed, overlooked, disrespected and disregarded.

“Building the future we want will take all of us learning, planning and working together,” Hille said. “It will take bold, clear statements and the will to back brave words with hard work. It will take easy-to-use digital tools to bring more people along with us as we build an economy that better serves all people and all places.”

To see their new website visit [www.mtassociation.org](http://www.mtassociation.org). For more information, please contact Ariel Fugate, Communications Coordinator at (859) 302-3868 or ariel@mtassociation.org.

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*About the Mountain Association:*

The Mountain Association invests in people and places in Eastern Kentucky to advance a just transition to a new economy that is more diverse, sustainable, equitable and resilient. The Lending team offers loans to existing and startup businesses and organizations. We are a Community Development Financial Institution and a non-profit, so we can offer greater flexibility and lend to those who may not otherwise qualify. Our Business Support program connects business owners and nonprofit leaders to consultants who can help them succeed. Our Energy experts help businesses, nonprofits, public agencies and homeowners find much-needed energy savings through utility bill analysis, on-site energy efficiency and solar assessments, financing and grant application support. The Mountain Association also engages in research, communications and advocacy for policy and narrative change, and works with partners on a variety of projects to demonstrate what’s possible in Eastern Kentucky. For more information, visit [www.mtassociation.org](http://www.mtassociation.org).