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## Asheville Hub leaders see climate as a rainmaker

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ASHEVILLE – Asheville Hub leaders are forecasting that climate could be a rainmaker for the Asheville economy, adding 1,000-3,000 jobs and up to federal funding of \$287 million a year.

The Asheville Hub Alliance, the cross-section of the community's civic, arts and business leaders who have been sketching out a vision for new economic and cultural development, want to raise \$50,000 to create a business plan to capture some of those public funds and private enterprise.

With the National Climatic Data Center located in Asheville's downtown for the past 50 years, Asheville could become a lightning rod for the latest scientific research and weather-related businesses that could tackle the issue of climate change.

"If we can't get behind this initiative, we will have missed a generational opportunity," said Mack Pearsall at the Alliance's monthly meeting Tuesday.

The Alliance agreed to raise an additional \$25,000 in private funds to hire a consultant to tell the group how to best advance its vision of an economic and community development based on the area's assets in arts and crafts, technology, medicine, tourism and manufacturing. Another \$25,000 will be needed to hire an executive director to keep the volunteer coalition operating.

Janice Brumit, president of the Alliance's executive committee, stressed that the Hub will serve as a catalyst for economic development, not taking over those responsibilities from the Asheville area Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Development Coalition, the Tourist Development Authority, AdvantageWest, or any of the other nonprofits and agencies that promote job growth.

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