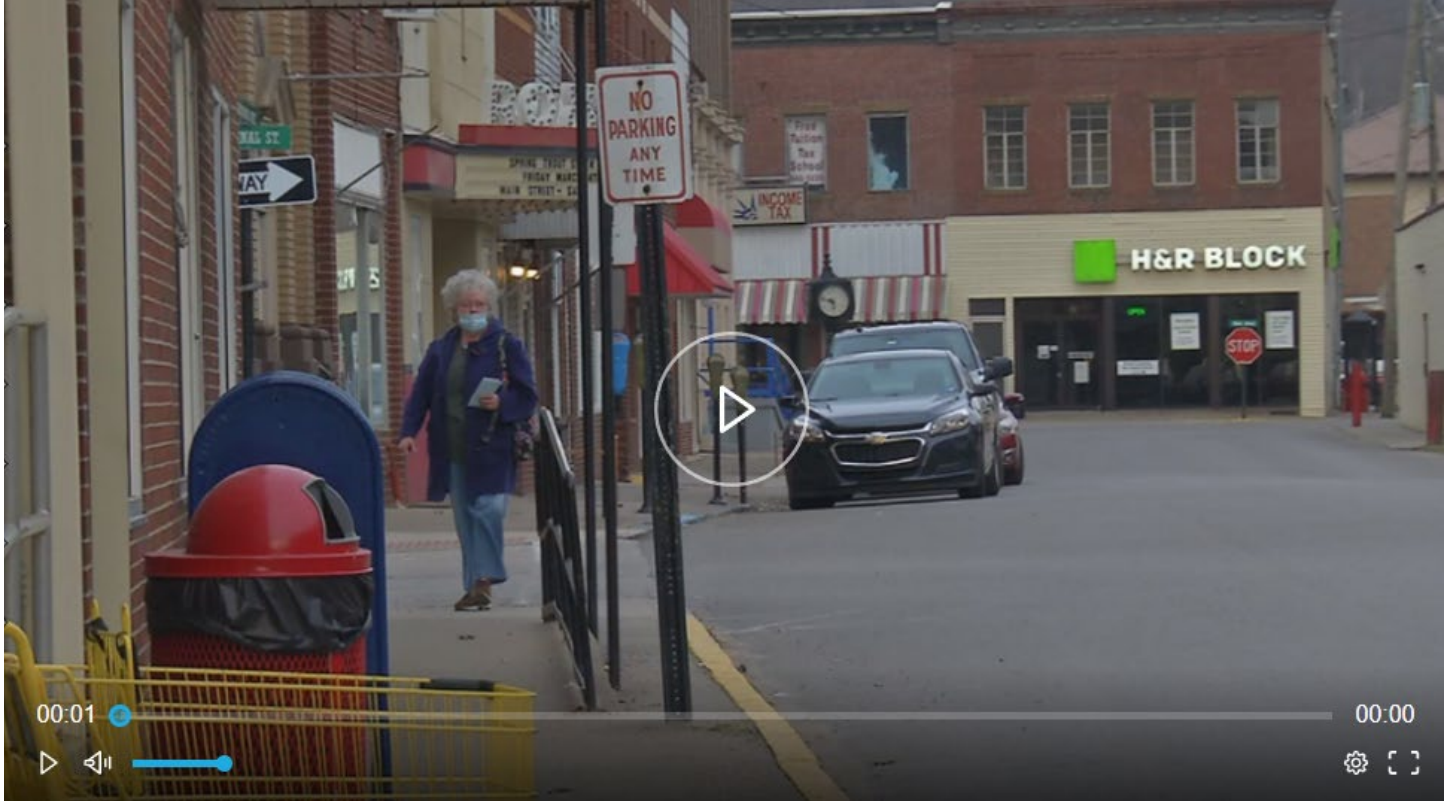


Without grocery store, Clendenin residents have to look harder for fresh food

by ANTHONY CONN

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Clendenin residents have had to find other options after Smith's Food Fair closed in 2016 (WCHS).

KANAWHA COUNTY, W. Va. (WCHS) — As the town of Clendenin moves on from the 2016 flood, it has done so without a grocery store in city limits.

The doors of Smith's Food Fair remained shut after the flood, leaving the community to get fresh food elsewhere. Mayor Kay Summers has been trying to fill the void ever since.

"The perception is, we don't have enough people to warrant a store now," Summers said. "They really won't even talk to us about it. I've contacted numerous grocery stores. People just aren't interested."

That means a longer drive for locals, as Clendenin was the closest option.

<https://wchstv.com/news/local/without-grocery-store-clendenin-residents-have-to-look-harder-for-fresh-food>

Resident Gary Rogers told Eyewitness News his drive to get groceries has become much longer than he's used to.

"We mostly have to do our big shopping at Kroger in Elkview or in Charleston," Rogers said. "We usually have to stock up on items in one big trip rather than making a stop if you need bread or milk or anything."

Summers said it's been more than an inconvenience as the city has lost about \$300,000 in those five and a half years.

"That has hurt us economically, because we do not have the B&O, or the sales tax or any of that from that time on," Summers said.

There are now some places Clendenin residents can get fresh food. Dollar General in town recently started offering produce.

"Especially for the people who live around here, and some of them don't have good transportation," shopper Preston Fitzwater said. "They're within walking distance to get produce. I think that's a good thing,"

There is a Save-A-Lot on Route 4, but it is outside city limits. Some residents said they wish they had more options around town.

"I'd rather have a better selection of food," Ralph Wagner said. "You go down there in north Charleston and you can buy seafood. Up here you can't buy seafood unless it's in a box."

As frustrating as the situation might be, residents are making it work.

"It could be better, but it really ain't all that bad either," Wagner said.