

January 11, 2017



## Building Stronger Economies in Appalachian Coal Country

*A Bi-weekly Update from the National Association of Counties and the National Association of Development Organizations*



Welcome to the first installment of **“Building Stronger Economies in Appalachian Coal Country.”** This curated bi-weekly newsletter is a joint resource from the [National Association of Counties \(NACo\)](#) and the [National Association of Development Organizations \(NADO\) Research Foundation](#). NACo and NADO are collaborating on a POWER technical assistance grant generously provided by the [Appalachian Regional Commission \(ARC\)](#). You are receiving this e-mail because of your involvement in the [Coal-Reliant Communities Innovation Challenge](#) workshops held in Pikeville, KY and Charleston, WV or are working on similar initiatives. Under a new grant, NACo and NADO are continuing to provide a suite of resources and technical assistance to those participating teams of communities and regions as they develop locally-grown, place-based plans to support economic development and improved quality of life.

This newsletter will be delivered every other Wednesday and will contain news about economic diversification efforts in Appalachia, resources and funding opportunities, and upcoming events and trainings to support your work.

We welcome your feedback on content and ideas and encourage you to share this newsletter with your colleagues and partners. If you would like to add or remove a name from the mailing list, please e-mail Brett Schwartz at [bschwartz@nado.org](mailto:bschwartz@nado.org).

Thanks for reading!

## Economic Diversification News

- A recent [Route Fifty article](#) highlights [TechHire Eastern Kentucky \(TEKY\)](#), a program funded through a public-private partnership in which participants are paid to **learn coding and other computer programming skills**, work at an internship, and earn a full-time job following the training. This program is funded in part through an ARC POWER grant. “So many people are getting through it and doing well. It’s just a testament to how hard people are willing to work here. They come from coal families. So they’ve seen people who’ve had to work hard ... It’s just a lot of grit,” says Sean Cowl, a 29 year-old who went through the program. Click [here](#) to read the article.
- [Governing](#) takes a look at the challenges and opportunities in promoting **economic diversification** in Appalachia, particularly in Eastern Kentucky. The article cites Mike Miller, executive director of the Kentucky River Area Development District: “Every so often we make a little headway. Five people go to work here and 10 over there and 50 over here. We got to take our little successes and celebrate them for 15 to 20 minutes and then go back to work and try to have another little success somewhere down the road a ways.” Click [here](#) to read the article.
- An [in-depth series from Fast Company](#) is taking a deeper look at efforts in Eastern Kentucky and West Virginia to build stronger, more resilient economies and communities in the face of changes to the energy sector. From one of the articles: “The decline of coal brings **unprecedented opportunities to build lasting, meaningful economies**. Here, in a place largely without the urban centers that traditionally attract the likes of Google and Uber, it is a chance to find new ways to utilize potential, to reinvent the rural economy into something multifaceted and resilient.” Click [here](#) to read the article.
- A [story on Marketplace](#) discusses the impact that colleges and universities in smaller places can have on supporting local economic development. From the conversation: “The way the economy is moving, where skills are rewarded and education is rewarded, the colleges — if they work with the local economic development officials — can be **magnets for companies looking to relocate**. And also if you have professors in there that are working in the science or engineering field, you might have people who are entrepreneurs basically and want to stay in the area, and like to stay in the area and build businesses as well.” Click [here](#) to read or listen to the story.

## Funding Opportunities and Resources

- The [U.S. Economic Development Administration](#) recently published its fiscal year (FY) 2017 funding availability notice for the **Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance programs**. Grants and cooperative agreements made under these

programs are designed to leverage regional assets and support creative approaches to advance economic prosperity in distressed communities. Click [here](#) for more details.

- The [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) is accepting proposals to fund programs for recruitment, training, and placement of unemployed and underemployed persons in environmental-related jobs. The **Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Program** is aiding skill-building and employment by awarding approximately \$3 million through an expected 15 to 16 cooperative agreements. Applicants may apply for up to \$200,000. A webinar providing guidance on the application process will be held **January 12 at 2pm ET**. Applications are due **February 24**. For further details on the program, click [here](#). Information on the grant can be found [here](#). To access the webinar, click [here](#) at the scheduled time.
- The [National Endowment for the Arts](#) has released a [new guide](#), “**How to Do Creative Placemaking.**” This publication shows how the arts and culture can serve as a tool for community and economic development. It includes a chapter focused specifically on creative placemaking in rural places and provides examples, case studies, and strategies for small places. From the guide: “[W]ith committed, open-minded leaders who embrace collaboration with new people, fresh ideas, and broad-based community input—not to mention who have a lot of patience—an arts-driven economic strategy can take root and lead to very positive economic outcomes.” Click [here](#) to download the free guide.
- In supporting President Obama’s goal of doubling apprenticeships by 2018, the [U.S. Department of Commerce](#) has released a report detailing employer views towards an apprenticeship model. “**The Benefits and Costs of Apprenticeships: A Business Perspective**” discusses outcomes from case studies on businesses and intermediaries adopting registered apprenticeships. The report reveals that apprenticeships show a return on investment and presents insight for employers considering apprentices with their respective business. The report is available [here](#).

## Events and Trainings

- NACo, NADO, and ARC are hosting a **small group workshop** event on **January 17 from 9:30am – 12:30pm on the University of Virginia’s College at Wise in Wise, Va.** The clinic is set to include continued peer-to-peer learning opportunities among the cohort of teams from the ARC region that participated in the 2015 Innovation Challenge workshops, as well as technical assistance presentations and best practice strategies and resources. This particular clinic will focus on advanced manufacturing/tech business development and business parks/site development, while also secondarily touching on outdoor recreation/tourism/entrepreneurship. If you are interested in attending, please e-mail Jack Morgan at [JMorgan@naco.org](mailto:JMorgan@naco.org) for more information and to RSVP.

Presenters currently scheduled:

-Erik Pages, EntreWorks Consulting, President

-Karen Fabiano, Appalachian Regional Commission, POWER Manager-Technical Assistance Program  
-Ellen Harpel, Business Development Advisors, President

- The goal of **community marketing is to make villages, towns, or cities competitive** and enable their stakeholders to thrive. On **January 19 at 2 pm ET**, the [North Central Regional Center for Rural Development](#) will host a free webinar "[Stakeholder Centered Community Marketing](#)." The webinar will discuss a cooperative framework model for community marketing in which stakeholders take a central role in crafting a unique market position and a clear "brand" for their community. To join, go to <http://ncrcrd.adobeconnect.com/ncrcrd> shortly before the webinar time.
- **Deep community engagement** gives local leaders courage to take risks that lead to positive change. The [Orton Family Foundation](#) pioneered the community development method *Community Heart & Soul* based on that premise. On a [conference call](#) on **January 26 from 3 – 4 pm ET**, three community leaders will share how they went beyond a "check the box" approach to engagement, working with residents to create ambitious plans that have led to dramatic and lasting results in their towns. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

## A Dose of Inspiration

- In this [short video](#), learn how efforts are underway in the town of **Whitesville, West Virginia to open up a locally-owned grocery store** which would bring fresh food options to residents and also potentially jump-start downtown redevelopment in this small community of 500 people. Click [here](#) to watch the video via YouTube.

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