

January 25, 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 latest 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 \(ARC\)](#). This newsletter is 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.

Thank you so much for the positive response to our first issue, archived [here](#). 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.

Photos wanted! If you have a photo from your community or region that you would like to submit for use as our alternating banner photo, please respond to this e-mail with a photo attachment and brief description of the image.

Thanks for reading!

Economic Diversification News

- Last week, the [Appalachian Regional Commission](#) announced **28 awards totaling close to \$26 million** to support coal-impacted communities in five states. The awards, made through the POWER Initiative, are anticipated to create or retain over 2,500 jobs. Said ARC Federal Co-Chair Earl F. Gohl: “These investments capitalize on the growing momentum for a diverse economy in Appalachia. They are strategic, collaborative, and impactful projects making the Region more competitive in technology, manufacturing, entrepreneurship, broadband, health, and a variety of other sectors.” Click [here](#) to view summaries of the awarded projects and initiatives. Learn more about POWER [here](#).
- A new online journalism effort will dive deep into the **stories and issues facing Appalachian communities** in [“100 Days in Appalachia.”](#) Led by the West Virginia University Reed College of Media Innovation Center with a variety of partners, this series will “take a closer look at just what makes this region such a flashpoint for so many of the social, economic, and political fractures in American communities.” Explore the stories [here](#).
- Though located outside of Appalachia, efforts underway in the state of Maine can serve as a good example for **resource-based economies seeking to diversify**. An article in [MaineBiz](#) discusses rural Maine’s strategy to address challenges faced by the dramatic decline in the forest products industry, including “mill site redevelopment, broadband access for communities affected by mill closures, support for small businesses, and training programs for high school students interested working in the logging industry,” as well as research to explore biomass opportunities. These efforts are supported by funding from the [U.S. Economic Development Administration](#), which also recently released a report following a site visit to the state. Click [here](#) to read the article and [here](#) to read the report, which outlines eight key strategies.

Funding Opportunities and Resources

- The [U.S. Department of Agriculture's \(USDA\) Agricultural Marketing Service \(AMS\)](#) has announced the availability of \$27 million in grants to fund innovative projects designed to **strengthen market opportunities for local and regional food producers and businesses**. Applications are sought for the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program, which includes [Farmers Market Promotion Program](#) (FMPP) and [Local Food Promotion Program](#) (LFPP) grants, and the [Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program](#) (FSMIP). The grant applications for FSMIP, FMPP, and LFPP must be submitted electronically through [www.grants.gov](#) by **11:59 pm ET on March 27**. AMS will also host a webinar to introduce potential applicants to [Grants.gov](#) on **February 8 at 2:30 pm ET**.
- The [U.S. Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) Rural Utilities Service \(RUS\)](#) has opened applications to the Rural Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guarantee Program and Community Connect Grant Program. The Rural Broadband Access Loan and

Loan Guarantee Program **provides funding for construction, improvement, or acquisition of facilities and equipment to expand services of broadband speeds in eligible rural areas.** Application submission windows will be **March 1 to March 31** and **September 1 to September 30.** The Community Connect Grant Program funds broadband expansion in areas that are not currently being considered by private service-providers. Applications are due **March 13.** For further details on the Rural Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guarantee Program, click [here](#). More information on the Community Connect Grant Program can be found [here](#).

- The [U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration](#) (FHWA) has released a guide called "[Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks](#)." This new guide is a publication of FHWA's Bicycle and Pedestrian program. It applies existing **national transportation design guidelines in a rural setting and highlights small town and rural case studies.** It addresses challenges specific to rural areas, recognizes how many rural roadways are operating today, and focuses on opportunities to make incremental improvements despite the geographic, fiscal, and other challenges that many rural communities face. There is also a web version of some of the guide information available [here](#).
- The [Citizens Institute on Rural Design](#) has published a new article that covers "**Trail-Oriented Development**" (TrOD), an approach that "capitalizes on trails as community amenities and leverages the placemaking and development potential adjacent to trails." The article provides a background on TrOD and notes successful case studies from around the country. Click [here](#) to read the article.
- The [U.S. Census Bureau](#) has introduced a Beta version of the Job-to-Job Flows Explorer. Job-to-Job Flows Explorer provides **statistics on work reallocation through an interactive platform.** The tool also allows tables, maps, and charts to be constructed. To access the Job-to-Job Flows Explorer, click [here](#). Instructions on the tool can be found [here](#).

Events and Trainings

- NACo and NADO hosted a technical assistance clinic workshop on January 17 in Wise, Va. This small group clinic brought together several team members from the ARC region that participated in the 2015 Innovative Challenge for a continued peer-learning opportunity. Presentations and discussions at this clinic focused on **site development and incentive trends, as well as successful best practices in entrepreneurship.** Some of the best practices featured include the [Kansas Pipeline program](#), the [Maine Top Gun program](#), the [OpportunitySWVA](#) team, and [Entrepreneurial Blueprint](#). A second technical assistance clinic for eligible teams is currently being scheduled for The Hive facility in Beckley, WV. in early February (date, time, and agenda TBD). This clinic will follow a similar format, but will focus more on **recreation, tourism, and marketing/branding.** Please direct any questions to Jack Morgan at JMorgan@naco.org.

- [NJIT's Technical Assistance to Brownfields \(TAB\)](#) program provides **free technical assistance to communities that helps guide them through the cleanup and redevelopment process at brownfield properties**. Communities and municipalities often need help in understanding the technical issues associated with brownfields projects – issues such as: deciphering technical reports; realizing health impacts and risks; financing brownfields projects; understanding science or environmental policy; learning how best to involve the community; and working with local, state, or federal governments. NJIT has been selected by the U.S. EPA to provide the assistance to communities, tribes, governmental entities, and non-profit in EPA Regions 1, 3, and 4 (New England, Mid-Atlantic, and the Southeast US). The program is generously funded by EPA. The process for getting assistance is informal - there are no contracts to sign, just send NJIT TAB an email at tab@njit.edu or call them at 973.642.4165.
- The [International Economic Development Council](#), in conjunction with the [West Virginia Community Development Hub](#), is hosting a free three-month webinar series on strategies to support **economic and community development in smaller places**. Topics include business retention and expansion, marketing for rural communities, and heritage tourism. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.
- On **February 10 from 12 – 1:30 pm ET**, the [Aspen Institute](#) is hosting "[Local Innovation Strengthening Rural Economies](#)," a panel discussion featuring innovators – business owners, intermediary partners, and investors – active in a variety of rural economies in the United States. **Rural manufacturing, rural wood products, and rural investment capital** will all be discussed during this meeting in Washington, DC. For those who cannot attend in-person, a live webcast will be available. This event is part of a six-part series of panel conversations that invites policymakers, economic and community development practitioners, and business and philanthropic leaders to engage in dialogue around advancing a rural opportunity agenda. Click [here](#) for more information and to RSVP for either in-person attendance or to watch the webcast.
- In the upcoming months, NACo and NADO will be hosting their 2017 Legislative Conferences in Washington, DC. Both conferences will feature a **workshop session on economic transition strategies for counties and regions**. For more information, visit the conference pages for the [2017 NACo Legislative Conference](#) (February 25 – March 1) and [NADO on the Hill: 2017 Washington Policy Conference](#) (March 20 – 22).

A Dose of Inspiration

- West Virginia-based photographer [Rebecca Kiger](#) beautifully captured images that highlight the efforts of the [Coalfield Development Corporation](#) to diversify the local economy as well as showcase the **spirit and energy of the people of the Mountain State**. Click [here](#) to watch a video made by [Ohio Valley Resource](#) of the stories and voices behind the photos.

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