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## 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 contains news about economic diversification efforts in Appalachia, resources and funding opportunities, and upcoming events and trainings to support your work in a variety of areas to improve economic development, infrastructure, and quality of life in the region.

**Content Wanted!** Have a news story or event you would like featured in our newsletter? Send an e-mail to Brett Schwartz at [bschwartz@nado.org](mailto:bschwartz@nado.org). We welcome your feedback on content and ideas and encourage you to share this newsletter with your colleagues and partners. Previous issues are archived [here](#). Thanks for reading!

### Economic Diversification News

- The [Bristol Herald Courier](#) discusses how new legislation may lead to Dominion Energy developing **pumped hydroelectric storage facilities in Southwest Virginia, including utilizing abandoned coal mines**. From the article: These facilities “consis[t] of two reservoirs, one at a higher elevation and the other at a lower elevation. The two reservoirs are connected by

huge pipes. A turbine and generator are situated between the two reservoirs...As the water flows down from the upper reservoir, it hits the turbine. It spins the generator and produces electricity." Click [here](#) to read the article.

- The [Marietta Times](#) covers how the Buckeye Hills Regional Commission in Ohio will support **the creation of three makers spaces in the region** with the support of a \$1.2 million grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission. From the article: "In the Marietta makers space, location still to be determined, welding and other hand-skills classes can open doors to other educational tracks in the area, provide a space to build products for internet-based secondary income sales, or to prototype product ideas for mass-manufacturing." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- [Fast Company](#) features **economic diversification and workforce training initiatives underway in West Virginia** – many of which are featured in the new documentary [From the Ashes](#) – including the efforts of the Coalfield Development Corporation and Solar Holler. From the article: "[T]ransitioning a state that at one time, had nearly half of its population working in the mines, toward a new economy will necessitate some growing pains - but the people doing this work see potential for West Virginia to represent something beyond the coal industry." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- Last week, **Appalachian Power announced it has plans to purchase wind power projects in Ohio and West Virginia**, reports the [Roanoke Times](#). From the article: "If regulators approve the purchases, these two wind farms will be the first two directly owned and operated by Appalachian, which has long relied on coal for the bulk of its power generation. The 175-megawatt Hardin Wind Facility will be in Hardin County, Ohio, and the 50-megawatt Beech Ridge II Wind Facility will be in Greenbrier County, West Virginia. Both are being developed by Invenergy LLC." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- The [Guardian](#) profiles the economic and social impact felt in McDowell County, WV after the **closing of the Walmart which led to unemployment, a decrease in the tax base, and the loss of a community gathering space**. The closure has also now **limited residents' access to fresh and healthy foods**. From the article: "[P]rocessed foods seem popular again; there are long lines again at the local McDonald's. "There's a lot of people getting sick since the store closed because they're not getting the right diet. It's sad to me, but bad food is cheap," [says Nicole Banks, a local corrections officer who wants to become a therapist]." Click [here](#) to read the article.

## Funding Opportunities and Resources

- The [US Economic Development Administration](#) has **announced new funding for coal-reliant communities and regions** through the [2017 Assistance to Coal Communities \(ACC 2017\)](#) initiative. \$30 million in ACC 2017 funds are available for projects targeted at directly assist communities and regions severely impacted by the declining use of coal through activities and programs that support economic diversification, job creation, capital investment, workforce development, and re-

employment opportunities. Funds are available immediately and must be awarded by **September 30**. A webinar was recently held to explain the program and is archived [here](#). Click [here](#) for more information about funding and eligibility.

- AARP is accepting applications for its [Community Challenge grant program](#) through **July 15**. Project proposals should be aimed at improving a community's built environment; expanding opportunities for all residents; and/or driving community engagement and interaction across diverse community residents. Projects can range from **short-term activities costing a few hundred dollars to sizable efforts that might need thousands**. Learn more about the program in a video [here](#) and click [here](#) to apply.
- The [US Department of Health and Human Services](#) has opened **applications for the Community Economic Development (CED) program**. Up to \$800,000 per applicant is available for projects aiding job creation and business development for low income persons. Eligible applicants must be designated as Community Development Corporations (CDCs). Applications are due **July 24**. More information is available [here](#).
- The [US Department of Agriculture](#) is accepting applications to the Socially-Disadvantaged Groups Grant (SDGG). The program offers **technical assistance in directing resources to assist rural Americans in need**. Eligible applicants include cooperatives, groups of cooperatives, and cooperative development centers. Maximum awards are \$175,000 and applications are due **July 25**. For more information, click [here](#).
- The [National Fish and Wildlife Foundation](#) is accepting applications for its new [Central Appalachia Habitat Stewardship Program](#), which is **dedicated to restoring and sustaining healthy forests, rivers, and streams for the region's native bird and freshwater fish populations**. Up to \$1.3 million is available this year for grants in the Appalachian region of Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia. Grants will be awarded in two categories: habitat restoration grants and focal geography grants. Applications are due **July 27**. Click [here](#) to learn more and apply.
- The [US Department of Transportation](#) is accepting **applications for the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant program**. INFRA has \$1.5 billion available for projects which meet national and regional economic goals and leverage non-federal funding. Through FAST Act requirements, at least 25% of the funding will be applied to rural projects. Applications are due **November 2**. For more details, the notice of funding opportunity is available [here](#).
- The [National Telecommunications and Information Administration](#) has released the [2017 BroadbandUSA Federal Funding Guide](#). The booklet shares **information on federal engagement and investments in broadband**. Click [here](#) to access the guide.

## Events and Trainings

- Yesterday, the [National Association of Counties](#) and the [NADO Research Foundation](#) hosted the webinar “Strengthening Economies in Coal-Reliant Communities through Brownfield Redevelopment.” The webinar discussed **best practices in the reuse of these brownfield sites and free technical assistance resources** available to communities from the [Technical Assistance to Brownfield \(TAB\)](#) providers. Click [here](#) to access a recording of the webinar.
- Investing in **agriculture and regional food systems has emerged as a leading diversification strategy** across coal country. Join the [National Association of Counties](#) and the [NADO Research Foundation](#) for a webinar **on August 8 at 3 PM ET** to learn about practical tools and strategies in incorporating regional food systems into economic development and diversification planning. Additionally, this webinar will feature current examples of coal-reliant communities of Colorado as case study examples. Click [here](#) to register.
- The [SOAR Summit 2017](#) is scheduled for **August 3 and 4 in Pikeville, KY** and will **showcase solutions currently driving economic growth in the region centered around seven areas of focus**. The conference will convene federal partners, funders, and support organizations while giving those in the region taking action access to these resources. This year will also have a mini-grant program to provide the top projects with access to funding resources to help them expand their impact. Click [here](#) for more information.
- The [2017 #WVBrownfields Conference](#) will take place **September 12 – 14 at the Erickson Alumni Center in Morgantown, WV**. The theme for this year’s conference is **Ready, Set, Redevelop**. The event kicks off on Sept. 12 with training for licensed remediation specialists, a grant writing workshop, and mobile workshops highlighting brownfields projects in Morgantown. The first full day of the conference, Sept. 13, will feature programming and sessions related to brownfield redevelopment in West Virginia. The second day, Sept. 14, will feature sessions covering regional brownfields topics impacting Central Appalachia. Click [here](#) to learn more and to register.

## A Dose of Inspiration

- Lessons from how Erie County, PA **responded to news that the coal-fired Huntley Generating Station would be shuttered can serve as a lesson to other coal-reliant communities and regions around the country**, according to [Grist](#). A coalition of nonprofits, unions, academic institutions, environmentalists, and others formed the Huntley Alliance which led to the development of [Tonawanda Tomorrow](#), a community blueprint for the future. From the article: “Through a series of listening sessions, door-to-door surveys, and voter-registration drives, the partnership channeled the hopes and anxieties of

hundreds of residents. The wish list that emerged included keeping schools intact, creating good-paying jobs, expanding the tax base, and improving public health and the environment.” Click [here](#) to read the article.

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