

April 25, 2018



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



Welcome to the latest issue “**Growing Stronger Economies in Our Nation’s Coal Communities.**” 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 [U.S. Economic Development Administration’s Denver Regional Office](#). The newsletter provides a national perspective on diversification efforts in coal communities, 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 your region. It is delivered every other Wednesday.

Content Wanted! Have a news story or event that you would like featured in our newsletter? Send an e-mail to Brett Schwartz at bschwartz@nado.org. We welcome your feedback on content and ideas and encourage you to share this newsletter with your colleagues and partners. Thanks for reading!

Economic Diversification News

- Wyoming is seeking to **boost opportunities in the aerospace and defense industries by growing, recruiting, and launching companies**, reports *KCWY*. From the article: ""Instead of being dependent on one market or industry like the energy industry, with its ups and downs, we're trying to smooth that out by bringing another industry in that has similar requirements for similar skills of our workforce," [said Charles Walsh, CEO of the Casper Area Economic Development Alliance]." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- Two articles highlight **how Teleworks USA is creating quality remote work opportunities for residents in Eastern Kentucky**. From the *Richmond Register*: "Through the work of Teleworks USA...more than 150 people are working remotely in Owsley County. This represents more than \$3 million in new wages being paid to citizens by remote-work companies." Click [here](#) to read the article. From the *Harlan Daily Enterprise*: ""Yesterday, we were fortunate enough to be able to speak to a group of people in Hazard (about) our Teleworks USA hub," [said Harlan County Judge-Executive Dan Mosley]. "We (spoke to) approximately 15 companies...Four of the 15 are already doing business with Teleworks, but 11 of them are looking at using Teleworks USA for training for their employees."" Click [here](#) to read the article.
- Google is building a **\$600 million data center on the site of the Widows Creek Fossil Plant, a coal power plant in Bridgeport, Alabama**, reports the *Times Free Press*. From the article: "Google was attracted to the site on the Tennessee River because of the availability of land, water, labor, and clean renewable energy. TVA can use some of the existing power lines for the data center's electricity demand and has pledged to provide Google renewable solar, wind, or hydro-generated power to comply with Google's desire to use 100 percent clean energy." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- *Utah Business* provides a snapshot of the future of the coal industry in the state, which will be part of a more varied energy mix. From the article: "Dr. Laura Nelson, director of the Governor's Office of Energy Development, says **we'll still use coal in the future because using a diverse group of energy resources is the key to affordability and sustainability**...We're not here to pick winners and losers when it comes to our resources," says Nelson, the governor's energy adviser. "We're still going to use coal. But how we use it might look different."" Click [here](#) to read the article.
- *CNBC* covers a wide range of diversification initiatives underway in Appalachia that are supporting workforce development, job retraining, and improved infrastructure. From the article: "The challenge, [says Michael Cornett, director of agency expansion and public relations of the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program], is to **get miners to see themselves in a different light, and to reimagine how to take the skills they have and apply them to another occupation**. Heavy-equipment operators, truck drivers, mechanics, and engineers from the coal industry may be able use their know-how in a variety of businesses, including the fledgling drone industry that's emerging." Click [here](#) to read the article.

Funding Opportunities and Resources

- The [U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development](#) (USDA-RD) is accepting applications for Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvement projects. The projects help **agriculture producers and small businesses lower their energy costs and use through renewable energy and energy efficiency improvements**. The deadline to apply for grants is **April 30**; loan applications are accepted throughout the year. More information is available [here](#).
- The Department of Labor’s [Employment and Training Administration](#) (ETA) has opened **applications to fund research of workforce program management and effectiveness**. The Reentry Projects initiative supports assessment of workforce programs and development of models supporting employment outcomes for targeted populations, including adult and youth. ETA is especially interested in supporting apprenticeship models. Awards are approved at up to \$4.5 million per project. Proposals are due **May 4**. The Funding Opportunity Announcement is available [here](#).
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s [Agricultural Marketing Service](#) has **opened applications for the Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)**. FMPP supports production and marketing of local and regional agricultural products. Eligible applicants include agricultural businesses and cooperatives, economic development corporations, nonprofits, and regional farmers market authorities. Applications are due **May 7**. Click [here](#) for more details.
- The Center for American Progress has released a new report, “Rural Pragmatism: Lessons from Colorado’s North Folk Valley” that highlights efforts **underway to support economic diversification in this coal region through renewable energy, outdoor recreation, agriculture, and more**. Click [here](#) to download the report.
- The [Rockefeller Foundation](#) and [Chan Zuckerberg Initiative](#) have announced new funding through the [Communities Thrive Challenge](#). The purpose of this challenge is to **fund and help to strengthen and scale community-driven approaches that enable low-income or otherwise financially insecure people find and retain well-paid and meaningful work, achieve financial security, or build economically vibrant neighborhoods**. This might include nonprofit programs; businesses, organizing or advocacy models; technologies; economic development strategies, or other approaches that deliver significant and consistent results in any of the following areas. Register by **June 12** and apply by **June 19**. Click [here](#) to learn more.
- The [Charles A. Frueauff Foundation](#) offers **funding for projects in the areas of education, human services, and health**. Funding is available to support specific initiatives in economic development, health education, and healthcare facilities. Applications are due **July 1**. More information on application guidelines, eligibility, and previously-awarded projects is available [here](#).

- [Rural Local Initiatives Support Corporation](#) (RURAL LISC) provides **loan funding for improvements to rural community facilities through its Growing Rural Communities Fund**. The Fund offers low-interest loans to eligible public facilities including health care centers and educational facilities in communities under 20,000 population. More information is available [here](#).

Events and Trainings

- Save the date for “Strengthening Economies in Wyoming: A Forum for Coal Reliant Communities” to be held in **Gillette, WY** on **June 21 and 22** and hosted by NACo and the NADO Research Foundation. This **free convening will bring together stakeholders from the public and private sectors for an educational and interactive gathering to share best practices, lessons learned, and new opportunities to support economic diversification**. Prepare for a mix of interactive sessions and small group discussions designed to deepen and foster new partnerships aimed at promoting innovation and prosperity throughout Wyoming and the Western regions. Registration will open shortly. Contact Jack Morgan at jmorgan@naco.org or Brett Schwartz at bschwartz@nado.org with any questions.
- As part of the [Smart Management for Small Water Systems Program](#), the [Environmental Finance Center Network](#) is **hosting two free webinars, “Technologies to Save Energy, Resources, and Time in Water System Operations” on April 25 and “Intermediate Asset Management | Level Up With Level of Service Goals!” on May 1**. “Technologies to Save Energy” will provide attendees with information on some of the fundamental technologies allowing for efficient utility operation. Click [here](#) to register. “Intermediate Asset Management” will explain how establishing level of service goals is one of the most underappreciated steps of asset management planning and show why small water systems shouldn’t skip this crucial step of asset management. Click [here](#) to register.
- New research shows that children from poor families in rural communities earn more by their mid-20s than their urban peers, contrary to stereotypes about the disadvantages of growing up rural. A major study of individual incomes found that poor children who grow up in three-quarters of rural counties earn more than the national average by their mid-20s. Join the [Orton Family Foundation](#) and [Daily Yonder](#) on **May 17 at 2:00 p.m. ET to learn about what researchers call “neighborhood effects” in rural communities and the lifelong advantages of growing up in places with less income disparity, good schools, and strong civic life**. Hear about newly released research on how community matters to poor children. Click [here](#) to register.
- The [Appalachian Higher Education Network](#) is hosting its 5th annual conference on **June 19 to 21** in Asheville, North Carolina. At the event, **connect with colleagues and to learn about successful strategies to increase postsecondary education attainment in Appalachia**. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

A Dose of Inspiration

- [Fruits of Labor, Inc.](#), located in the coalfields of West Virginia, was recently ranked in the Top 20 in the “Sweetest Bakery in America” Contest, reports *WOAY*. Based in Rainelle, Fruits of Labor “is a nationally certified culinary arts and agricultural educational training center for youth and adults. **At-risk youth/young adult students participate in [its] nationally certified American Culinary Federation quality training program and farm-to-table café and bakery as an addiction prevention program.**” Click [here](#) to read the article and click [here](#) to learn more about Fruits of Labor.



This newsletter is made possible with the support of an [US Economic Development Administration – Denver Regional Office POWER grant to the National Association of Counties](#) and the [National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation](#). The views and opinions expressed by other organizations or outside publications referenced in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of NACo, NADO, or EDA.