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Welcome to the latest issue of “**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](#). This 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

- **Researchers at Washington State University have announced a new concrete alternative made of coal fly ash**, reports *Science Daily*. From the article: "The team designed the fly ash concrete to be pervious, which means water can pass through it to replenish groundwater and to mitigate flooding potential. Researchers have demonstrated the strength and behavior of the material in test plots on the WSU campus under a variety of load and temperature conditions. They are still conducting infiltration tests and gathering data using sensors buried under the concrete. They eventually hope to commercialize the patented technology." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- A new publication from the Appalachian Regional Commission, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky highlights 42 county "bright spots" in the region where health outcomes have been better than anticipated, reports the *Lexington Herald-Leader*. From the article: "The report **found some common threads in Appalachian counties beating the odds on expected health results. One was that they have community leaders engaged in health initiatives...Another common thread was collaboration among different sectors such as health providers**, including county and regional health departments; public officials and agencies, including libraries and schools; churches; food pantries; and volunteers." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- **Wyoming is positioning itself to be a leader in blockchain technology as part of a statewide effort to diversify its economy**, reports *OZY*. From the article: "Other U.S. states have big ideas for blockchain, the digital ledger technology that underpins bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies, and which has been tipped to transform sectors such as shipping, logistics, and finance. But only Wyoming has passed legislation to create a framework for blockchain and crypto businesses, giving it a head start on would-be rivals such as Arizona, Michigan, and North Dakota. About 200 new companies have sprung up in Wyoming over the past few months, according to state records, with names like Bison Crypto Power and Something Something Blockchain." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- Greene County, PA is developing a new comprehensive plan for this coal region and is placing economic diversification as a major goal, reports the *Observer-Reporter*. From the article: "Coal, though not providing the same number of jobs it did in 2008, continues to be produced in the county at high levels and is expected to remain a fairly stable employment base...**One part of the plan, however, will look closely at the tax base, including the loss of tax revenue from coal as it continues to be mined and is removed from the tax rolls.**" "We have to look at what we can do to substitute for those losses," [said Robbie Matesic, executive director of the Greene County economic development department]." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- Big changes may be on the way for Pueblo, CO as Xcel Energy has proposed plans (which still need state regulatory approval) to greatly increase wind and solar production while decreasing reliance on coal-fired power, reports *Colorado*

Public Radio. From the article: “The **Xcel proposal would add 700 megawatts of new solar. Pueblo specially stands to benefit greatly from one of the largest solar battery storage projects in the country.** Another local benefit? The utility’s desire to add 1,100 megawatts generated by new wind towers would mean that the city’s Vestas Wind Systems plant could get a piece of the action. Business is already booming on the grounds of the largest tower manufacturer in the world. Orders at the south Pueblo plant are fully booked through 2021, fueled by the expiration of a production tax credit for wind.” Click [here](#) to read the article.

Funding Opportunities and Resources

- The [U.S. Economic Development Administration \(EDA\)](#) has published the [FY 2018 Economic Development Assistance Programs \(EDAP\) Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#). Under this NOFO, **EDA solicits applications for construction, non-construction, planning, technical assistance, and revolving loan fund projects under EDA’s Public Works program and Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) programs, which includes Assistance to Coal Communities.** Grants and cooperative agreements made under these programs are designed to leverage existing regional assets and support the implementation of economic development strategies that advance new ideas and creative approaches to advance economic prosperity in distressed communities, including those negatively impacted by changes to the coal economy. Click [here](#) to learn more.
- The [U.S. Department of Labor](#) (DOL) has released its notice for the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations (WANTO) grant. The **program supports pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities for women through recruitment, training, and retraining activities.** Between two and six grants will be awarded totaling \$250,000 and \$500,000. Applications are due **August 16**. Click [here](#) for the funding notice.
- The [Gannett Foundation](#) is offering grants to communities within the Gannett Co. Inc. service area for **various priorities including education, economic development, and environmental conservation.** Applications are due **August 17**. Further details are available [here](#).
- The Foundation for Rural Service is accepting **grant applications from rural communities to support business and community development, education, and telecommunications.** Priority is given to projects in broadband development. The deadline to apply is **September 15**. Program guidelines and instructions to apply are available [here](#).
- The [U.S. Department of Labor](#) (DOL) **has announced the availability of \$85 million for YouthBuild programs.** YouthBuild is a pre-apprenticeship initiative supporting at-risk youth ages 16-24 through education and skill development opportunities for in-demand jobs. Funding is provided to expand public- and nonprofit-sponsored YouthBuild programs with 85 awards anticipated throughout the country. Awards will be granted from \$700,000 to \$1.1 million with a 25 percent match

requirement. Grant recipients with FY2017 funding are not eligible to apply. Applications are due **September 18**. Click [here](#) for the funding notice.

- Does your town or city have an underused public space that would be ideal for outdoor concerts? The [Levitt Foundation](#) is now accepting applications for the Levitt AMP [Your City] grant program through **September 25**. Each year, the Levitt Foundation awards \$25K matching grants to up to 15 U.S.-based nonprofits serving small to mid-sized towns and cities to present the Levitt AMP Music Series, **10 free concerts that inject new life into public spaces and create vibrant community destinations**. Click [here](#) for more information and to apply.
- The [U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development](#) (USDA-RD) is **seeking applicants for priority points consideration under the Strategic Economic and Community Development (SECD) program**. To receive priority points, applicants submit proposals which detail projects supporting regional economic development plans in rural areas. If selected, points will be awarded to listed projects and recognized by USDA for Rural Development funding. Applications are due **September 30**. Click [here](#) for more information.
- The [U.S. Department of Labor](#) (DOL) has issued a notice on a sector-based apprenticeship program. The **program, Scaling Apprenticeship through Sector-Based Strategies, aims to increase apprenticeship opportunities in new industry sectors**. DOL will award \$150 million towards 15 to 30 apprenticeship programs. The agency will prioritize applicants that seek to expand apprenticeships within industries with few available learning opportunities and apprenticeships for small to medium-sized businesses. Proposals are due **October 16**. Click [here](#) for the funding notice.
- The [U.S. Department of Labor](#) has introduced **a new website on apprenticeship programs**. [Apprenticeship.gov](#) offers resources for job seekers, employers, training partners, educators, and workforce agencies to better engage in apprenticeship opportunities. The website is a product of the Task Force on Apprenticeship Expansion's [final report](#) released last month. Click [here](#) to explore the apprenticeship website.
- The [U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development](#) (USDA - RD) has **released an interactive feature on the opioid crisis and successful community responses throughout the country**. The mapping tool displays input from communities provided through USDA-hosted roundtables and online form, "What's Working in Your Town?". The interactive map is available [here](#). Rural Development encourages responses through online submission under the "Share Feedback" button [here](#). Additional resources can be found on USDA's opioid website [here](#).
- The [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development](#) (HUD) has released a **new video tutorial on timely completion of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) projects**. The video provides insight on CDBG timeliness calculation and how compliance is set within the program's performance standard. Click [here](#) for the video. Additional resources and

technical assistance on CDBG are available at the Explore CDBG website [here](#). The HUD Exchange portal shares successful CDBG project examples and allows users to contribute project stories; click [here](#) for the HUD Exchange portal.

Events and Trainings

- Registration is now open for [“Strengthening Economies in Colorado: A Forum for Coal Reliant Communities”](#) scheduled for **September 19 and 20 in Delta, CO** and hosted by NACo and the NADO Research Foundation with the support of U.S. EDA. 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 Colorado and the Western regions. Click [here](#) to learn more and register.
- The annual Mined Land Reforestation Conference will be held **August 8 and 9** at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. **This year’s theme is ‘Developing Partnerships for Mine Land Reforestation.’** The conference will feature presentations, posters, and an awards luncheon on August 8, and site visits to mined lands at various stages of reforestation on August 9. Click [here](#) to learn more and register.
- [SOAR Summit 18](#) is scheduled for **August 30-31** at the East Kentucky Expo Center in Pikeville. This year’s summit is a **convening of organizations, businesses, and individuals who represent the best of Appalachia Kentucky**. This year’s Summit will feature inspiring keynote speakers who promote innovation and collaboration, economic and community development, and the alignment of the region’s work with the [Blueprint for a 21st Century Appalachia](#), a visionary plan for Appalachia Kentucky that was created through the input of thousands of people from across the region. Click [here](#) to learn more and to register.
- The [Appalachian Regional Commission’s Annual Summit](#) is scheduled for **September 12 – 14** in Tupelo, Mississippi. The program will **highlight best practices, emerging ideas, and lasting strategies for economic development across Appalachia**. It will also cover hot topics in the Region such as capital access, the opioid crisis, and land reclamation. Plus, new to this year’s agenda are focused technical assistance offerings – including skill building workshops and strategy labs with ARC experts. Click [here](#) to learn more and to register.
- The [Center for Creative Land Recycling](#) is hosting the National Brownfields Leadership Summit in **Washington, DC on September 25 and 26**. This event will bring together top leaders from across the redevelopment industry with key decision makers to discuss **the latest in redevelopment policies, programs, and funding opportunities**. Click [here](#) to learn more and to register.

- **Wyoming towns, cities, tribal governments, and counties are invited to apply for the Community Builders Leadership Institute (CBLI) scheduled for September 26 – 28 in Lander, Wyoming.** The CBLI engages community teams in an intensive workshop that builds leadership and practical understanding of ways to align community planning and economic development in today's economy. Working with dynamic trainers and facilitators, participants will leave the CBLI equipped with a clear plan of action for how to address the top issues facing their community. Click [here](#) to learn more and apply by **August 20**.
- [AARP's](#) 2018 Livable Communities National Conference is scheduled for **November 12 – 14 in Charlotte, NC**. Join hundreds of elected officials, planning professionals, local leaders, and community advocates from throughout the nation to **learn from livability experts, connect with peers who are driving community change, and visit innovative projects and programs in and around Charlotte**. This conference is for anyone who is committed to making their state, county, city, town, or neighborhood a great place for people of all ages during all life's stages. Click [here](#) to learn more and to register.

A Dose of Inspiration

- The [Seppi Supersoil stone crusher](#) has the potential to be a gamechanger for enabling commercial scale agriculture on surface mined lands throughout Appalachia with its ability to **transform compacted, rocky surface into tillable soil at a rate of three acres per day**. Click [here](#) to view a video to learn more. Between now and August 15, feel free to contact [Reclaim Appalachia](#) President Nathan Hall at nhall@reclaimappalachia.com to schedule a visit in Holden, WV and see the stone crusher in action.



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