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# GROWING **STRONGER ECONOMIES** IN OUR NATION'S COAL COMMUNITIES

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



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](mailto: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

- The U.S. Economic Development Administration has **announced \$1 million in grant funding to support diversification efforts in Kentucky through the Assistance to Coal Communities program**. From the press release: "Henderson County Fiscal Court in Henderson, Kentucky will receive \$990,700 to expand Ohio Drive to meet the transportation needs of the existing local businesses [and] Perry County Fiscal Court in Hazard, Kentucky will receive \$60,000 to help with planning for the Drone Port of Kentucky project." Click [here](#) to read the press release.
- **Wyoming has approved the construction of the state's first utility-scale solar farm** which will be built on federal land in the southwestern part of the state, reports the *Casper Star Tribune*. From the article: "The solar farm will sell its electricity to the state's largest utility, PacifiCorp's Rocky Mountain Power, under a 20-year agreement...Once up and running the solar farm will create enough electricity to potentially power 17,000 homes, according to the BLM's analysis." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- A recent meeting in Mingo County, West Virginia **explored opportunities for the new Appalachian Regional Airport, now 95% complete, and the impact it will have on the regional economy**, reports the *Williamson Daily News*. From the article: "The new airport sits on approximately 900 acres of a reclaimed coal mining site, a partnership between Alpha Natural Resources and the Mingo Redevelopment Authority. [Leasha Johnson, executive director of the Mingo Redevelopment Authority] said her goal would be to bring manufacturers of airplane parts and equipment, like KCI Aviation in Bridgeport, West Virginia, which has done work for large airlines and the military." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- *Outside* magazine provides an in-depth look at the **opportunities and challenges facing Emery County, Utah as it grows an outdoor recreation industry in this coal region**. From the article: "The Emery County Public Land Management Act, introduced in Congress this month, would create a massive National Conservation Area out of the San Rafael Swell and designate some 577,986 acres as wilderness...Not everyone is happy about it. Some locals don't want their community overrun by jeepers, cyclists, and selfie-stick-wielding tourists. Others resent any restrictions on local lands. But Emery's nascent experiment may yield an alternative formula for regions stricken by collapsing extractive industries: The county wants to revitalize its community by increasing public lands protections, embracing the adventurers who recreate on them." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- The *Associated Press* reports on efforts underway in the Midwest by the Just Transition Fund to support economic diversification in communities with coal mines and coal-fired power plants. From the article: "In April, **the Just Transition Fund received a \$1 million grant from Google for its general operations and to create a guide for communities facing transition away from coal**. The Just Transition Fund works with communities facing both mine and power plant closures..."When you think about coal communities in transition, there are three fundamental questions communities have

to deal with," said [JTF Executive Director Heidi Binko]. "What do you do with the former site, what do you do with the jobs that are lost, and what do you do with erosion of the tax base?" Click [here](#) to read the article.

- The Montana Renewables Development Action Plan, created by the Bonneville Power Administration with support of the governor's office, **explores markets for Montana renewable energy sources to serve West Coast buyers**, reports the *Billings Gazette*. From the article: "Scrutiny of transmission lines revealed 360 megawatts of space for renewable energy, with more to come as Colstrip Units 1 and 2 close. Analysts then discovered a way to qualify Montana green power for renewable energy tax credits in Washington state, a big step for making the state's wind energy attractive to Washington buyers like Puget Sound Energy and Avista Corp." Click [here](#) to read the article.

## Funding Opportunities and Resources

- 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. 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.
- Applications are being accepted to the Rural Cooperative Development Grant Program. The [U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development](#) (USDA-RD)-led program supports Cooperative Development Centers which advance business and improve rural cooperatives. Technical assistance provided by Centers **include developing feasibility studies and business plans and fostering strategic planning**. Centers may be located anywhere but activities must target individuals and businesses in rural areas. The deadline to apply is **July 24**. More information is available [here](#).
- The [Health Resources and Services Administration](#) (HRSA) recently issued a notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) for the new Rural Communities Opioid Response program. The **initiative provides resources for eligible recipients to develop plans**

**supporting opioid prevention, treatment, and recovery aimed at reducing opioid overdoses in rural areas.** The program expects to award 75 grants with up to \$200,000 available for recipients to develop plans. Applications are due **July 30**. Click [here](#) for the NOFO and additional information. Helpful resources are available [here](#) for communities preparing to apply for the grant.

- The [Amerisource Bergen Foundation](#) has announced the availability of **funding for education, prevention, and safe disposal of opioids**. The deadline to apply is **July 31**. More 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) **recently 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.
- 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

- On **July 18 from 2 – 3 p.m. ET**, [BroadbandUSA](#) will host a [webinar](#) **focusing on statewide strategies to promote broadband adoption and use in rural communities**. Speakers will highlight the role of state governments, libraries, and university extension programs in planning and executing these strategies. The speakers will also discuss the role of broadband adoption in rural economic and workforce development, as well as approaches to facilitate broadband use and improve digital skills. Click [here](#) to learn more and to register.
- The Rural Behavioral Health Webinar Series continues this summer with an upcoming **webinar on opioids and youth in rural communities**. The presentation, “The Impact of the Opioid Epidemic on Children and Youth in Rural Communities – How Schools and Communities are Responding,” will be held on **July 19 at 3 p.m. ET**. This series is sponsored by the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) (SAMHSA) and American Institutes for Research. Register [here](#).
- The [Center for Community Progress](#) will host a webinar on **July 26 from 12 – 1 p.m. ET** that will look at a **model for engaging communities in the transition of vacant lots from liabilities to assets while at the same time using the process to empower residents**. Through Grounded’s ReClaim Ambassadors program, residents receive micro-grants and technical assistance for on-the-ground projects on vacant land. Ambassadors learn a range of topics - from soil sampling and site analysis - to outreach activities, presentation, budgeting, and volunteer management all applied to their own greenspace project. Click [here](#) to learn more and to 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.

- **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.**

## A Dose of Inspiration

- Efforts are underway in Bell County, Kentucky to develop the **Appalachian Wildlife Center on a former mine site that will serve as a research center and wildlife viewing destination**, reports *Scientific American*. From the article: "By fostering grassland that supports more game animals, birds, and other wildlife than it does now, [Wildlife biologist David Ledford] thinks he can attract paying visitors, such as families on nature-oriented day trips. He also plans to offer university research teams plots on his land to test other potentially profitable remediation options, such as orchards and vineyards. The project has raised \$35 million so far from donors and the U.S. Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation Enforcement. Construction for the visitor center began in June." Click [here](#) to read the article.



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