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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

- *Utah Public Radio* covers how **efforts to diversify economies in the state's rural communities are part of a larger initiative to grow 25,000 jobs in rural counties by 2020**. From the article: "Rebecca Dilg, the rural community outreach manager for the governor's office of economic development, is working to provide broadband coverage for Utah's rural communities. "It's almost like saying why was the phone important back was in the 1930s to the rural communities? It's communication," Dilg said. "It's not only nationwide, it's global. We're able to have employees, people who live in rural communities who can stay with their families, they can stay on their farms. Yet, they can still have a remote job where they're connected with companies on the Wasatch Front."" Click [here](#) to read the article.
- The *Daily Yonder* takes a closer look at **the impact of a growing trails system and the outdoor recreation industry on Southwest Virginia's economy** which has been helping to diversify a region that for years relied on industry, coal, and farming. From the article: "Trails and outdoor recreation attract locals and non-locals alike who contribute to the process of Southwest Virginia's and Appalachia's post-industrial economic development. They mark an imperfect but positive trend to decades of jobs losses. The real political-economic struggle for communities, municipalities, and business owners is to translate that economic activity into higher quality jobs and wider-spread prosperity." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- **Gillette, Wyoming, located in the heart of the Powder River Basin's vast quantities of coal reserves, is embracing economic diversification** by exploring manufacturing opportunities, focusing on quality of life, and looking at new ways coal can be used, reports *Public Radio International*. From the article: "[T]he company Atlas Carbon in Gillette is finding alternative uses for coal...A large conveyor belt delivers coal to a processing plant where it's dried and the chemical composition of the coal is altered. At the end of the process, out comes a tiny pebble with microscopic pores, now called "activated carbon"... These tiny pebbles can be used for things like water filtration or scrubbing gas vapor from car engines." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- Small family farmers in Kentucky are exploring opportunities to **grow hemp for a variety of uses, including for construction materials, paper, medicinal purposes, and energy**, reports *WBKO*. From the article: "[Chad Wilson] and his son now farm hemp for its CBD as part of Kentucky's research pilot program, testing out different varieties and ways to cultivate the crop during a time when agriculture in the state has been struggling..."We've allowed other systems to control our farms, and it's time for the farmer to take his farm back," he said. He said hemp is the perfect crop to do just that." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- Last month Xcel Energy, Colorado's largest energy provider, announced it would **close two coal-fired power plants earlier than expected and ramp up its reliance on renewable energy**, reports the *Associated Press*. From the article: "Xcel's plan calls for purchasing two existing gas-fired generating plants in Colorado and adding five solar farms and three wind farms.

Xcel would also renew its contract to buy power from an existing solar farm...The plan calls for adding 1,100 megawatts of generating capacity to Xcel's system from wind, 700 from solar, 380 from natural gas, and 275 from batteries. One megawatt can power 1,100 typical Colorado homes, Xcel said." Click [here](#) to read the article.

- Montana's Department of Environmental Quality has **plans to cleanup many abandoned coal mines around the small town of Roundup in an effort to limit flooding and restore habitat**, reports the *Billings Gazette*. From the article: "There are tunnels under the Musselshell River with entrances that are occasionally consumed when water reaches flood stage. There's one that interacts with the drinking water for the town of 1,900. Most are long forgotten, though now and then one will reveal itself under the slow-turning wheels of a farmer's tractor." Click [here](#) to read the article.

Funding Opportunities and Resources

- This week, the [U.S. Economic Development Administration \(EDA\)](#) 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. Economic Development Administration](#) recently **announced funding under the University Center Economic Development Program for the Denver and Austin regions**. University Centers develop regional strategies to enhance business expansion and job creation. Various initiatives are supported through technical assistance including applied research centers, feasibility studies, and market research. Institutes of higher education are eligible to apply. Applications are due **July 15**. The funding notice for the Denver region is available [here](#); click [here](#) for the Austin region notice.
- The [Administration for Community Living \(ACL\)](#) has announced **funding for innovative approaches to nutrition programs in the aging services network**. Innovative projects could include efforts to improve physical and mental health symptoms and increase activity. Demonstrated value such as cost savings and impact towards a national need must be supported in the project. The deadline to apply is **July 17**. The grant notice is available [here](#).
- 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 [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](#) recently 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) recently **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

- [Smart Growth America](#) recently delivered a **webinar on the new federal Opportunity Zones program**. The webinar shed light on several of the program's unanswered questions; it addressed the Opportunity Zones program's economic context and incentives, as well as the policies and practices needed by stakeholders to achieve equitable development outcomes in America's most distressed communities. Click [here](#) to watch the recording.
- [America Walks](#) will **host the webinar "Opportunities for Walkability in Rural Communities and Small Towns" on July 11 from 2 to 3 p.m. ET**. Attendees of this webinar will: learn about programs, policies, and projects that support walkability in rural communities and small towns; hear inspiring stories of communities on the walking path; explore resources that can help you in your work to create walkable communities. 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 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.

A Dose of Inspiration

- *Inside Philanthropy* **breaks down the state of rural philanthropy in the United States, noting that contrary to popular belief, there is a lot of action directed at smaller communities which can make a big difference in small towns and regions.** From the article: "Health conversion foundations are the big movers behind this work...The funders, sometimes referred to as health legacy foundations, typically start when a nonprofit health organization, like a hospital or health plan, is sold or merged and the proceeds need to stay in the nonprofit sector... Leaders at regional health foundations that work with rural communities noted that they bring the same principles to their work in rural and urban areas. Foundations strive to allow communities to lead the work. They respect the expertise of residents, who are best equipped to know what their communities need." Click [here](#) to read the article.



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