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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](#). 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

- The ENGAGE Summit **brought together over 200 Wyoming residents between the ages of 16 and 35 to share their ideas about the future of the state and their place in it**, reports the *Sheridan Press*. From the article: “[Josh Law, the founder and chief development officer of Flood Marketing in Sheridan] attended discussions on business and entrepreneurship, tourism, advanced manufacturing, and agriculture and said one of the common themes across those discussions was the need for Wyoming to find better ways to develop, and make available, the resources it already has. “It wasn’t so much that the jobs aren’t here, it’s that strategies aren’t here, the ideas aren’t here,” Law said.” Click [here](#) to read the article.
- The West Virginia University School of Public Health has established a **new public health residency program to address the multiple health challenges facing the state**, reports *WVU Today*. From the article: “Residents in the new program will participate in both academic and practical/clinical activities. The first year will focus on satisfying requirements for the Master of Public Health degree and participation in the Occupational Medicine clinic and other clinical rotations. During the second year, residents will be based with a local or regional health department where they will gain experience in typical public health department and clinical services, primary care, and mental health care services.” Click [here](#) to read the article.
- **The Central Arizona Project, the state’s largest renewable water supply resource, has signed a 20-year power purchase agreement with the AZ Solar 1 power plant**, reports *Cleantechnica*. From the article: “Solar AZ 1 will be constructed, owned, and operated by Origo Energy USA. The contract calls for the first delivery of electricity to begin on December 31, 2020...Power for the Central Arizona Project currently comes from the Navajo Generating Station, the oldest coal-fired plant in the US and one of the largest. It is scheduled to be decommissioned in 2019.” Click [here](#) to read the article.
- Coalfield Development has acquired the SustainU clothing manufacturer as part of its network of social enterprises in Appalachia, reports the *Herald-Dispatch*. From the article: “SustainU, which **sources and creates products from recycled cotton and recycled plastics, has developed a local production workforce including people recovering from drug and alcohol abuse**. Click [here](#) to read the article.
- The University of Utah has received \$140 million from the U.S. Department of Energy to **explore new forms of geothermal energy extraction**, reports the *Salt Lake Tribune*. From the article: “That money, spent over the next five years, will expand the FORGE laboratory, short for Frontier Observatory for Research in Geothermal Energy...At FORGE, researchers are tapping techniques picked up from the oil and gas industry’s hydraulic fracturing to create geothermal reservoirs, which could be replicated widely.” Click [here](#) to read the article.

- An interview with Jason Begger, Executive Director of the Wyoming Infrastructure Authority, covers **efforts underway in the state to explore new technologies to capture carbon emissions** and find new uses for it in a variety of industries. Click [here](#) to listen to the interview from *Colorado Public Radio*.
- An *Emsi* blog post showcases research about **how diversified economies strengthen regional resilience, lower unemployment, and are less volatile**. From the post: “We compared the top and bottom 10 metros during the peaks and valleys of the Great Recession and recovery (2007-2010, 2010-2017) and found the following: More diverse economies had lower unemployment rates and recovered quicker than less diverse economies; more diverse economies were less volatile, as measured by changes in employment and number of jobs; and a cluster strategy can lead to growth while a diversification strategy can lead to stability. Both strategies can be pursued concurrently for long-term benefits. Click [here](#) to read the post.
- The Environmental Protection Agency has **announced the latest round of technical assistance support to 16 communities through the *Local Foods, Local Places (LFLP)* program**. From the EPA press release: “Through LFLP, partner communities work with a team of experts to identify local assets and opportunities that can support local food enterprises and set goals for leveraging those resources in ways that spur revitalization. They then develop an implementation plan and help identify potential resources from the participating federal agencies to support implementation.” Click [here](#) to read the press release.

Funding Opportunities and Resources

- Supported by the [U.S. Economic Development Administration](#), [Smart Growth America \(SGA\)](#), and [Recast City](#) are **offering free technical assistance designed to help communities incorporate small-scale manufacturing into their plans for revitalizing downtown or other close-in neighborhoods**. Small-scale manufacturers such as woodworkers, fabricators, hardware prototypers, microbrewers, and coffee roasters with regional and national distribution have emerged as a significant force in today’s urban economy. This emerging sector can serve as a powerful tool in the effort to revitalize downtown and other core neighborhoods—while also creating jobs and connecting more residents to economic opportunity. Applications are due **June 29**. Click [here](#) for more information and to apply.
- The [U.S. Department of Treasury](#) is now **accepting applications for fiscal year (FY) 2018 allocation round of the New Market Tax Credit Program**. Community Development Entities (CDEs) certified by the Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) are eligible to apply. Applications are due **June 28**. More information on CDE certification is available [here](#). Click [here](#) for the funding notice.

- The [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) (USDA) is **accepting applications to its Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) Programs**. Funding priorities align with recommendations from the Rural Prosperity Task Force. Maximum awards are expected at \$2 million for loans; maximum awards for grants are expected at \$300,000. Applications are due **June 30** and must be submitted in paper format to the applicant's respective USDA state office. A list of state agencies can be found [here](#). The funding notice is available [here](#). Click [here](#) for details on the Rural Prosperity Task Force report.
- 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](#).
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture's [Rural Housing Service](#) is accepting applications to the Community Facilities Technical Assistance and Training Program. The program **provides funding towards planning activities for community facility needs**. Project goals should align with priorities outlined in the recent Rural Prosperity Task Force report. Applications are due **July 2**. Click [here](#) for the report; the funding notice is available [here](#).
- 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 [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 [Aspen Institute](#) has released a [new brief](#), “Now Jobs in Young Adult Workforce Programming.” A “now job” strategy is a practical approach to the reality that, for young people who face systemic economic barriers, career paths can be long and strewn with obstacles. The strategy significantly expands the traditional job developer role and has implications for how effective workforce development is delivered, funded, and assessed. This brief describes how **connecting young adults to “now jobs” can address their immediate income needs while continuing to prepare them for long-term career opportunities.** Click [here](#) to access the brief.

Events and Trainings

- On **June 26 at 2 p.m. ET**, [Community Builders](#) will host a [webinar](#), “The Art Stimulus: Exploring the Confluence of Public Art and Community Development in the West.” From fostering social cohesion and enhancing public education to painting sidewalks and improving housing conditions, **this webinar will explore new ways for approaching public art as a tool for community development.** Featuring Maria Sykes of the [Epicenter](#) community design center Green River, Utah, and J. Matt Thomas of the [Paseo Project](#) in Taos, New Mexico, participants will learn just how deep the impact can be when community arts organizations become the torchbearers of community progress. Click [here](#) to learn more and register.
- Ohio University’s [Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs](#) is hosting the webinar “Closing the Skills Gap for Coal Mine Workers” at **1 p.m. ET on June 28**. It will feature work that is supported by a U.S. Economic Development Administration investment in an ‘Appalachian Ohio Skillshed Analysis’ project **to map the occupational skills of displaced coal economy workers to emerging employment opportunities.** Click [here](#) 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](#).

A Dose of Inspiration

- **A drone-flying competition for elementary, middle, and high school students in Eastern Kentucky illustrates the rise of the drone industry in this coal region** and shows how it can be a force for economic diversification, reports *Ohio Valley ReSource*. From the article: "At the end the day, 11th grader Seth Hatfield of Belfry High School emerged as the winner, having flown two of the cleanest and quickest laps through the course. Hatfield had also won in 2017, and said he's interested in studying aviation at Eastern Kentucky University, and would love to come back and work with drones if the industry can get going, which he's optimistic about..." "I don't want to move away," Hatfield said. "I want to stay here and see this area flourish." Click [here](#) to read the article.

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