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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

- Wyoming has been selected as one of three Western states **to receive funding and technical assistance from the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education**, reports *Wyoming Public Media*. From the article: “[The support] will help the state create policies to grow the highly skilled workforce necessary to support advanced manufacturing, computing technology, financial services, and value-added natural resources.” Click [here](#) to read the article.
- The *Daily Yonder* highlights how **tourism in southwest Virginia is growing the regional economy and supporting economic diversification through outdoor amenities such as the Virginia Creeper Trail**. From the article: “The trail opened in 1987. Today, over 250,000 people enjoy the Creeper every year. Washington County and the towns of Damascus and Abingdon are significant beneficiaries of this revenue... The Creeper Trail represents one of Damascus’ main sources of income...[Damascus Mayor Jack McCrady] estimates that the town pulls in \$450,000-\$500,000 annually from tourists.” Click [here](#) to read the article.
- *Fast Company* discusses **efforts to promote renewable energy opportunities on the Navajo Nation in Arizona as plans are underway to close Navajo Generating Station twenty-five years ahead of schedule**. From the article: “The first Kayenta solar farm, which started operating in April 2017, has 120,000 panels mounted on trackers that follow the sun to generate as much power as possible. It generates 27.3 megawatts of electricity, which is sold to Salt River Project, which also runs the coal plant. The power is sent across the reservation and to cities in Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and California. At the height of construction, the project employed 284 people, the majority of whom were Navajo.” Click [here](#) to read the article.
- *ProPublica* covers the **economic and social challenges facing families in Adams County, Ohio as a result of the closure or scheduled closure of the region’s coal-fired power plants**. From the article: “The announcement [of the closure of Stuart and Killen Stations] left the county with just a year and change to figure out how it was going to make do without them. And it provided just a year and change for...hundreds of other workers – there were more than 100 management employees and 300 contractors in addition to the 380 union workers – to answer the question being asked in other deindustrializing places all over the country: Stay or go?” Click [here](#) to read the article.
- Recent SEC filings show that **additional coal mines may be closing in Montana within the next twenty years**, reports *Montana Public Radio*. From the article: “The mines include one on the Crow Reservation in Montana that could shutter in four years and the massive Rosebud mine near Colstrip which could shut down operations by 2029. Westmoreland’s three mines in Montana employ more than 500 people and generate tens of millions of dollars in state and federal tax revenues. The Absaloka mine could shutter over the next four years and the massive Rosebud mine near Colstrip could shut down by 2029.” Click [here](#) to read the article.

- The University of Wyoming has announced that it has **received funding from the U.S. Department of Energy to explore opportunities for a commercial-scale geological storage complex for carbon dioxide** in the state. From the article: “The two-year, \$12.25 million project will involve the drilling of a stratigraphic test well near Dry Fork Station to collect core material in order to evaluate the geological, geophysical, geochemical, geomechanical, and hydrological characteristics present. The data will help determine the suitability of the underground geologic formations for commercial CO2 storage.” Click [here](#) to read the article.

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. Find out more about this free technical assistance opportunity by [registering](#) for a brief informational webinar with SGA and Recast City on **June 11 at 2 p.m. ET** to learn about the process and ask any questions. Applications are due **June 29**. Click [here](#) for more information.
- The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) [Office of Community Services](#) (OSC) is **accepting applications to the Community Economic Development grant program**. Funding is provided for Community Development Corporations (CDCs) to implement projects improving job creation and business development among low-income populations. Applications are due **June 15**. Click [here](#) for the grant posting.
- The [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development](#) and [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](#) recently **opened applications to the Veterans Housing Rehabilitation and Modification Pilot Program**. Funding is available to modify or rehabilitate eligible veterans’ primary residences. Eligible applications include nonprofits which support veterans and low-income individuals. Applications are due **June 25**. Click [here](#) for more details.
- 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 [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. An informational call is scheduled for potential applicants on **June 12 at 2:00 p.m. ET**. Click [here](#) to register. The deadline to apply is **July 17**. The grant notice 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 [Kleinman Center for Energy Policy](#) has recently released a new report, "Reimagining Pennsylvania's Coal Communities: Stakeholder Perspectives and Strategies for Economic Revitalization." It attempts to **capture and categorize local and regional strategies being pursued to assist distressed workers, businesses, and communities**. The report covers current

information from on-the-ground stakeholders—surveys with small business owners, outreach for interviews with more than 125 stakeholders, and two regional meetings in coal producing areas of the state. Click [here](#) to download the report.

- A new interactive **tool highlights Opportunity Zones by visualizing data on investment scores and displacement risk** of individual census tracts. The tool, Opportunity Zones Explorer, is provided by the [Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis](#). Click [here](#) to access the Opportunity Zones Explorer. More information on Opportunity Zones is available on the [Department of Treasury](#) website [here](#).
- The [National Telecommunications and Information Administration](#) (NTIA) **has requested feedback on sources of available broadband data and processes to ensure reliable information**. NTIA is working to improve ways of identifying areas lacking adequate broadband access. Comments are being requested from various stakeholders – public, private, nonprofit, academia. Submissions are due **July 16** and may be emailed to mappingrfc@ntia.doc.gov. Click [here](#) for more details.

Events and Trainings

- Registration is [open](#) 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. Click [here](#) to register. Contact Jack Morgan at jmorgan@naco.org or Brett Schwartz at bschwartz@nado.org with any questions.
- Get a head start on the Brownfields ARC grant application period and understand how the BUILD Act may change the guidelines. Join the [Center for Creative Land Recycling](#) on **June 6 from 2 to 3 p.m. ET** for a **webinar to hear what others have learned from their ARC grant applications and receive grant writing advice** from expert grant writers from around the country. 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.
- The [Appalachian Creative Placemaking Leadership Summit](#) is scheduled for **June 21 and 22** in Charleston, West Virginia. Topics include **building arts in rural and isolated areas, creative placemaking in post-industrial communities, mapping**

assets, and protecting the ethos of a community. Artists, municipal officials, real estate professionals, and economic and policy development professionals are encouraged to attend. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

A Dose of Inspiration

- A team of **students at Eastern Kentucky University are finalists in the prestigious E3 College Competition for designing a video game that is inspired by an Appalachian mining town**, reports the *Lexington Herald-Leader*. From the article: "In "Appalachian Mining Town," players act as a historical surveyor investigating coal mines loosely based on Blue Heron, KY, a coal town on the banks of the Big South Fork River in McCreary County that was abandoned in 1962. The students developed the game in a spring 2018 Environment Design for Games course. [Student Nick Tiemeyer] said Blue Heron was chosen as a model for the setting because of its connection to students who live in the area. The team of students included coders and visual artists." Click [here](#) to read the article.



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