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Welcome to the latest issue “**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 [US 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

- Hazard, KY is taking a multi-faceted approach to economic diversification, which includes a focus on advanced manufacturing, drone technology, coding and software, infrastructure, and utilities, reports *CNN Money*. From the article:

"Economic development groups in Perry County recently **conducted a study and discovered that the former coal miners' skills in areas like hydraulics, mechanics, and electrical engineering would be well-suited for other industries.** "Their skills can easily be transferred to aerospace and other manufacturing, for instance," said Kathy Walker, director of the HAAS eKentucky Advanced Manufacturing Institute in Paintsville, Kentucky. "We're potentially sitting on a labor gold mine here."" Click [here](#) to read the article.

- The state of Colorado is exploring ways to support rural entrepreneurs and startups by providing access to investment capital through a new innovative program, reports *Venture Beat*. From the article: "In September, Governor John Hickenlooper announced his administration would allocate \$9 million (with an option for an additional \$3 million) to a fund that would provide early-stage investment capital and/or debt to startups in rural Colorado counties. The **fund will primarily focus on agriculture, advanced manufacturing, education, health and wellness, tourism and outdoor recreation, energy natural resources, clean tech and technology, and information.** While several states have offices or programs dedicated to rural economic development or state-backed venture funds, directly combining the two is rare — and needed." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- The *Register-Herald* shares highlights from the West Virginia Good Jobs Conference, held earlier this month. The event brought together a variety of stakeholders from throughout the state **to discuss diversification through tourism, outdoor recreation, mine reclamation, property redevelopment, and more.** From the article: "During a discussion on what is working in economic development, leaders from Wyoming, Mingo, and Fayette counties spoke on what economic models were working for them...[All] agreed on one common principle, in order for a development project to succeed there has to be buy-in from multiple groups." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- NACo's *County News* reports on **efforts underway in Arizona and Colorado to address the impacts of the decline in the coal industry, including the unexpected early closure announced for the Navajo Generating Station in Cococino County, AZ.** From the article: "[Coconino County Supervisor Lena] Fowler said education is going to be the cornerstone of northern Coconino County's resilience. Four institutions — Coconino Community College, Northern Arizona University, Navajo Technical University and Dine College — will fill the gap created when the community college pulled back on operations on its Page campus three years ago. Of the other participating schools, Northern Arizona University was the only one within 130 miles. The Page Higher Education Consortium will offer classes starting in early 2018. She said there would be an emphasis on the hospitality industry and outdoor recreation — nearby Lake Powell is a popular attraction, and Glenn Canyon and Grand Canyon national parks need rangers." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- The University of Kentucky reports that researchers there have **developed a process to produce rare earth concentrates from coal through an innovative method that is low cost and has less of a negative impact on the environment** than other approaches. From the article: "From national defense to health care, rare earth elements or REEs are essential

components of technologies like iPhones, computers, missiles, and other applications. Interest in REEs is at an all-time high in the U.S. right now, with the Department of Energy investing millions in research.” Click [here](#) to read the article.

- In a recent post, the National Cooperative Business Association CLUSA and the Environmental and Energy Study Institute announced a new partnership to promote the rural energy economy. From the article: “Called the Partnership for Advancing an Inclusive Rural Energy Economy, **the program helps rural electric co-ops develop on-bill financing programs that finance energy efficiency upgrades and community projects in solar and clean energy storage at no upfront cost to their customers...**By giving electric co-op members and other utility customers the ability to finance energy efficiency improvements made to their homes and businesses over time, on-bill financing is an affordable way to integrate technology that ultimately reduces energy costs, improves reliability, and increases efficiency.” Click [here](#) to read the article.

Funding Opportunities and Resources

- The [Rural Health Information Hub](#) (RHIfhub) has developed a [Rural Transportation Toolkit](#), recognizing that a significant barrier to achieving rural health outcomes is access to health facilities and services, including transportation. The toolkit contains **resources and information focused on developing, implementing, evaluating, and sustaining rural transportation programs**, including information on various models and examples. Click [here](#) to access the toolkit.
- [Smart Growth America](#) has released a new whitepaper [“Made in Place: Small-scale Manufacturing and Neighborhood Revitalization.”](#) **Small-scale manufacturing can grow local entrepreneurship and small business, develop or enhance new and existing economic sectors, and revitalize downtowns and business districts.** Using tools and case studies, this whitepaper builds the case for why economic development practitioners should be thinking about working with small-scale manufacturers, how to grow the sector, and the particular synergies that are created when locating these businesses in downtowns and mixed use centers. Click [here](#) to download the paper.
- The [President’s Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis](#) has published its **final report on the federal response to addressing opioid addiction**. The report offers key recommendations in fighting opioid abuse including block granting federal funding to states for life-saving programs and establishing educational campaigns to prevent drug use and addiction. The report also cites the importance of technology and telemedicine to support drug treatment in underserved regions. Click [here](#) for the report.
- The [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) (USDA) has introduced a **new website dedicated to resources for veterans seeking opportunities in agriculture and rural America**. The website features USDA-led AgLearn curriculum providing information

for employees in veteran-related opportunities. Education, employment, and entrepreneurship are highlighted through programs across 16 agencies. The website is available [here](#).

- The [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) (USDA) is offering **funding for initiatives expanding access to local foods in schools**. The [Farm to School Program](#) provides grants to plan, establish, or sustain Farm to School programs. Implementation, planning, and training grants are funded at varying levels under this opportunity. Applications are due **December 8**. Further details are available [here](#).
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [Rural Utilities Service](#) (RUS) is providing \$10 million to help communities with high energy costs. The [High Energy Cost Rural Communities Grant Program](#) provides **funding for installation of on- and off-grid renewable energy systems and energy efficiencies upgrades**. Applications are due **December 11**. More information is available [here](#).
- Applications are due **December 15** for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) [Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Grants](#). These grants **fund programs that recruit, train, and place local, unemployed, and under-employed residents with the skills needed to secure full-time employment in the environmental field**. EPA encourages applicants to develop their curricula based on local labor market assessments and employers' hiring needs, while also delivering comprehensive training that results in graduates securing multiple certifications. As in past rounds, regional councils and workforce investment boards/workforce development boards are eligible to apply. Click [here](#) to learn more information and to apply.

Events and Trainings

- Increasingly, philanthropic organizations are thinking more broadly about how to support systemic change in local communities. Join a free call on **November 30 from 1 – 2 p.m. ET** to **hear how three foundations are investing in long-term transformation** using Community Heart & Soul, the [Orton Family Foundation's](#) community development model. Click [here](#) to learn more and register.
- Accessing, interpreting, and incorporating the right data are some of the most important tasks in writing an effective community or regional plan. Join the [NADO Research Foundation](#) and the [BlastPoint](#) team on **Wednesday, December 6 from 2 – 3 p.m. ET** for a [free webinar](#) that will **explore how big companies think about data and how you can adapt these approaches to improve your planning and policy development work** - no technical training required! This session will cover concepts like indexing, segmentation, and forecasting, and show how real examples from the world of marketing

and analytics are within reach of anyone with the right tools. This session will also take a deep dive into thinking about data geographically and include a demo of BlastPoint's features. Click [here](#) to learn more and register.

- Join [NACo](#) on **December 12 at 2 p.m. ET** for interactive [webinar](#) to **learn how counties are improving their economies and building thriving communities by leveraging their arts and culture assets**. Local communities will discuss the creative placemaking work that they have done to address local challenges. This discussion will provide county elected officials and staff members with examples of successful creative placemaking efforts from across the country and tips for how to develop and implement projects in their own communities. Click [here](#) to learn more and register.
- As part of its Resilient Counties Initiative's effort to create a Disaster Toolkit for Counties, [NACo](#) will host a [Disaster Response and Recovery Social Media Day](#) on **December 13** to **showcase how counties have responded to and recovered from disasters and have strengthened resilience within their communities**. Throughout the day, NACo will share examples of county accomplishments, disaster resilience tools, and resources for counties. Join NACo by posting links to or short summaries of your county's disaster response and recovery projects, resources, lessons learned, tips, and innovative efforts on [NACo's Facebook page](#) or on Twitter ([@NACoTweets](#)) using the hashtag [#ResilientCounties](#). Click [here](#) to learn more.
- Registration and hotel accommodations are now open for the [2017 National Brownfields Conference](#), taking place **December 5 – 7, 2017** in Pittsburgh, PA with pre-conference programming on December 4. Join fellow planners, investors, developers, scholars, students, and government leaders to discuss **best practices, share challenges and successes, and stimulate new ideas with the goal of enhancing and expanding brownfields revitalization and economic redevelopment**. Register for the conference and book your hotel stay [here](#).

A Dose of Inspiration

- *CBS News* reports on how the organization [Mined Minds](#) in West Virginia is **training out-of-work coal miners and their families how to write code and build websites and apps**. To date, 80 people have received coding certificates from the program. Click [here](#) to watch a video and meet some of the program's participants.



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