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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

- *Pacific Standard* highlights the **Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative (KVEC) and how it is providing support to 22 rural school districts in eastern Kentucky through a variety of initiatives**. From the article: "The leaders of KVEC hope for two things. The first is that a technically competent workforce and a sophisticated, high-quality school system, combined with strategic investments in facilities and resources, will attract modern industries to the region. The second is that at least some of the students who are learning how to code, build drones, and design video games today will remain in, or return to, the region to start businesses of their own and help rewrite eastern Kentucky's story over time." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- The state of Montana is launching a new program to support small towns and rural communities throughout the state, reports the *Great Falls Tribune*. From the article: "Beginning this fall, **Main Street Montana – Rural Partners will start six community partnerships to provide aid and help economic and community development projects to rural Montana**...[Governor Steve] Bullock and Lt. Gov. Mike Cooney said they will develop partnerships with community leaders, businesses, local organizations, and the public in rural communities to address challenges unique to rural Montana and connect communities to share opportunities." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- *Yes! Magazine* features the **Mountain Association for Community Economic Development's (MACED) energy efficiency training program and how it is creating new opportunities for participants through retraining and skills development**. From the article: "The six-month internship with Mountain Association for Community Economic Development offered training in new energy efficiency professions, placement with a local employer, and the potential for longer-term employment after the job ended. [Former coal miner Frank] Morris applied for the internship and was accepted, along with another ex-miner named Randall Howard. The two received hands-on training in conducting energy audits—learning how to use equipment such as infrared cameras, duct blasters, blower doors, and much more—and went to work at their respective jobs, Morris for the nonprofit Housing Development Alliance and Howard for Christian Outreach with Appalachian People, an affordable housing organization." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- As part of the [2018 Assistance to Coal Communities program](#), the **U.S. Economic Development Administration awarded the Sheridan Economic and Educational Development Authority \$2.2 million to support the development of a manufacturing facility at the Sheridan High-Tech Park**, reports the *Sheridan Press*. From the article: "The proposed approximately 35,000-square-foot facility will be built on a portion of the nine remaining acres in the development and leased to Kennon Products, Inc., allowing the company to focus on a significant expansion...Kennon Products specializes in the research, development, and manufacture of protective coverings and materials for a range of high value assets, from military aircraft to human life." Click [here](#) to read the article.

- A **new report prepared for Navajo and Apache counties in Arizona explains the importance of pursuing diversification strategies** as the region prepares for future coal fired power plant closures, reports the *White Mountain Independent*. From the article: "The study also identifies industries with the potential to develop in the area...Helium extraction, forest biomass, and tourism (already a major industry) are listed as having a high probability of growth, but the number of jobs generated by these industries is 100 or less, except for tourism, which is listed as 100+ jobs. The likelihood for the development of the potash industry, renewable energy, outdoor recreation, manufacturing, agriculture, and remote workers are listed somewhere in the middling range, with potash offering the most potential jobs. The study points to the probability that a mosaic of different industries and businesses is the most likely future scenario for economic growth." Click [here](#) to read the article.

## Funding Opportunities and Resources

- The [U.S. Department of Labor](#) (DOL) has issued a notice on a sector-based apprenticeship program. The **program, Scaling Apprenticeship through Sector-Based Strategies, aims to increase apprenticeship opportunities in new industry sectors**. DOL will award \$150 million towards 15 to 30 apprenticeship programs. The agency will prioritize applicants that seek to expand apprenticeships within industries with few available learning opportunities and apprenticeships for small to medium-sized businesses. Proposals are due **October 16**. Click [here](#) for the funding notice.
- The [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development](#) has released the **funding matrix and dashboard reports from the Office of Community Planning and Development**. These reports cover the funding information for all cities and states that receive funds from Community Development Block Grants, Continuum of Care, Emergency Solutions Grants, HOME, Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS, and Housing Trust Fund. These reports can be found [here](#).
- [America Walks](#), partners of the Every Body Walk! Collaborative, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Juliet Ashby Hillman Foundation, Lyft, WalkBoston, and other generous sponsors, have announced another round of the Community Change Grant program. This **program will award grantees \$1,500 in community stipends for projects related to creating healthy, active, and engaged places to live, work, and play**. Projects should be able to demonstrate how they will create healthy, active, and engaged communities that support walking as transportation, health, and recreation. Click [here](#) for more information and to apply by **November 2**.
- [Entrepreneurial Ecosystems in Appalachia](#) is a collection of entrepreneurship research, case studies, and data from [EntreWorks Consulting](#), the [Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness](#), and the [Center for Rural Entrepreneurship](#) on behalf of the [Appalachian Regional Commission](#). The goal of the project is to **document entrepreneurship metrics and strengthen Appalachian communities' understanding of the entrepreneurial environment not only locally, but across the larger**

**region.** It includes an [entrepreneurship dashboard](#), [resources inventory](#), and [reports and case studies](#). Click [here](#) to learn more and access these materials.

- The [Rocky Mountain Institute](#) has **released a new report, “Managing the Coal Capital Transition: Collaborative Opportunities for Asset Owners, Policymakers, and Environmental Advocates.”** From the report: “The early retirement of hundreds of billion dollars of capital stock globally is a structural shift with enormous—and divergent—implications for stakeholders. This report seeks to provide a balanced perspective on how to proceed and takes into account the perspectives of three major groups: coal plant asset owners, who stand to bear the burden of capital losses associated with premature closure of coal-fired generating assets; environmental advocates, who seek to accelerate coal phaseout in line with the objectives of the Paris Climate Agreement; and policymakers, who must balance the environmental necessity of accelerated coal plant retirement with thoughtful, managed allocation of the associated capital losses.” Click [here](#) to download the report.

## Events and Trainings

- The [St. Louis Federal Reserve](#) is hosting the webinar [“The Opioid Epidemic: What We Know and How We Connect Community Practices”](#) on **October 18 at 3 p.m. ET**. Participants will **learn about the opioid epidemic and its impact on the economy, specifically labor force participation**. Examples of local models and practices used to address aspects of the opioid epidemic will also be shared. Click [here](#) to learn more and to register.
- [NTIA’s Broadband USA](#) and the [Center for Innovative Technology](#) are hosting the Virginia Broadband Summit on **October 30** in Roanoke, VA. This **summit will provide information to help accelerate broadband connectivity, improve digital inclusion, and support local priorities**. Topics include local broadband planning, funding, and engagement with service providers. Speakers and attendees from Virginia, federal agencies, and across the country will come together to explore ways to facilitate the expansion of broadband capacity, access, and utilization. The agenda is now available [online](#). The summit is free and open to the public. Click [here](#) to learn more and to register.
- On **November 8 and 9**, the [Jackson Hole Global Forum](#) will **bring together diverse experts to discuss and compare the current challenges and potential opportunities for U.S. coal communities and similar regions around the world** to generate climate solutions and new models of economic growth. [“Climate Solutions, Coal Communities, and Economic Diversification”](#) will focus on the particular challenges faced by carbon-intensive areas. It will help provide the global context, new ideas, new partnerships, and new recommendations for communities, businesses, policymakers, and concerned citizens in Wyoming and beyond. Click [here](#) to learn more and to register.

- The [Environmental Finance Center Network](#) is hosting a variety **of free webinars for small water systems** in October and November. Click the links to learn more and to register: [Managing Disasters Before Disasters Strike \(October 10\)](#), [Understanding the Root Cause of a Problem at Your Water System \(October 18\)](#), [Working Together to Protect Your Drinking Water Source \(October 25\)](#), [Risk and Resilience: Addressing Vulnerability for Coastal Communities \(November 2\)](#).
- [AARP's](#) 2018 Livable Communities National Conference is scheduled for **November 12 – 14 in Charlotte, NC**. Join hundreds of elected officials, planning professionals, local leaders, and community advocates from throughout the nation to **learn from livability experts, connect with peers who are driving community change, and visit innovative projects and programs in and around Charlotte**. This conference is for anyone who is committed to making their state, county, city, town, or neighborhood a great place for people of all ages during all life's stages. Click [here](#) to learn more and to register.
- The [National Summit for Gateway Communities](#) will celebrate the role of gateway communities in the stewardship of America's public lands and identify opportunities to help them thrive. It will bring together **gateway communities, their partners, and experts from conservation, community and economic development, recreation and tourism, planning, and other creative fields to highlight success stories and lessons learned** while engaging in robust discussions that lead to specific actions for invigorating the future of gateway and rural communities. The summit will take place on **December 11-13, 2018**, at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. Click [here](#) to learn more and to register.

## A Dose of Inspiration

- Thomas Hansell's 2016 documentary "After Coal" has been adapted into a book and will be released next month. Hansell, an assistant professor in Appalachian State University's Appalachian studies program, focuses in both the film and book on **how coal-reliant communities in Appalachia and South Wales in the United Kingdom are seeking to diversify their communities, become more sustainable, and lay a strong foundation for the future**. Says Hansell: "I hope that my work can bring people together to celebrate common bonds, to discuss differences, and to control the development of our cultures and communities." Click [here](#) to learn more.



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