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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

- **American Metal Works, a company based in Paintsville, KY, is providing new advanced manufacturing job opportunities for former coal miners**, reports *WYMT*. From the article: "With the demand for advanced manufacturing comes the demand for a skilled workforce. Scott Bowen says American Metal Works came into his life at just the right moment. "I worked in the coal industry in a town next door over there in Salyersville for 14 years. And you know I just thought that I would retire from there. But the coal industry did what it did and I found myself not knowing how I was going to support my wife and two young children," said Bowen. "A lot of skills I had at Mineral Labs, that's where I worked at, transferred over to this. And I have new hope, you know, I'll retire at American Metal Works," said Bowen." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- **A proposed 30,000-acre windfarm in Laramie County, WY could provide energy to 70,000 homes in Northern Colorado**, reports the *Gillette News Record*. From the article: "It would become one of northern Colorado's largest sources of wind power, tripling what Platte River now uses, according to documents. In addition to turbines, an above-ground, 80- to 100-foot transmission line would carry power from the wind farm to Rawhide Energy Station near Wellington, Colorado. The project is expected to establish 250 temporary construction jobs and 10 full-time jobs but, because project representatives were not available for comment, it is unclear how many of those jobs will benefit Wyoming's economy. After completion, ranchers would resume using the property for grazing." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- West Virginia's energy representatives recently gathered at the 2018 West Virginia Chamber's Annual Meeting and Business Summit and discussed a variety of issues including energy diversification, reports the *Register-Herald*. From the article: "While largely discussing the impact of natural gas on the market, at its heart the discussion was about diversification. **"For years coal was the base of everything we did," said Bob Orndorff, the West Virginia state policy director for Dominion Energy. "It still is. It still has a role, but we also need to talk about wind, we need to talk about solar because the Procter and Gambles of the world want that.** If we are to recruit companies to work in West Virginia, we need to meet their needs." Orndorff called Dominion's view as an all-in strategy, meaning using all sources of available energy. He called for the state to do the same." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- At a meeting of the Grand Junction, CO Area Chamber of Commerce, Eric Eddings, associate dean of research at the College of Engineering at the University of Utah, discussed possibilities for alternative uses of coal, reports the *Grand Junction Sentinel*. From the article: "Eddings suggests that people shift their mindset on coal from an energy resource to a raw material for use. This would be similar to petroleum, which can be burned for fuel, but also is in items such as plastic and clothing...**One possibility for coal would be a conversion to rare earth materials, which are found in batteries, magnets, electronics, and military products.**...Eddings also focused on the possibility of converting coal into a carbon fiber,

which is used in items such as sporting goods, aerospace applications, wind turbine blades, and other specialty applications.” Click [here](#) to read the article.

- **Forbes profiles the winners of this year’s 2018 Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards from the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE).** From the article: “OSMRE honors merited state regulatory agencies and coal mining companies with two award programs annually: one for reclamation projects at coal-mined lands abandoned prior to the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977, the other for reclamation of mines which began operations after passage of the law...Reclamation—basically, returning lands to conditions similar or innovative—has led to adaptive land uses for sites, like farms and pastures, public parks and athletic fields, and ecological restoration for wildlife and wetlands. Forestry reclamation is paramount in some coalfield communities, to regain healthy, productive forests and prevent landslides.” Click [here](#) to read the article.

## Funding Opportunities and Resources

- The Foundation for Rural Service is accepting **grant applications from rural communities to support business and community development, education, and telecommunications.** Priority is given to projects in broadband development. The deadline to apply is **September 15**. Program guidelines and instructions to apply are available [here](#).
- The [U.S. Department of Labor](#) (DOL) **has 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.
- Does your town or city have an underused public space that would be ideal for outdoor concerts? The [Levitt Foundation](#) is now accepting applications for the Levitt AMP [Your City] grant program through **September 25**. Each year, the Levitt Foundation awards \$25K matching grants to up to 15 U.S.-based nonprofits serving small to mid-sized towns and cities to present the Levitt AMP Music Series, **10 free concerts that inject new life into public spaces and create vibrant community destinations.** Click [here](#) for more information and to apply.
- The [U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development](#) (USDA-RD) is **seeking applicants for priority points consideration under the Strategic Economic and Community Development (SECD) program.** To receive priority points, applicants submit proposals which detail projects supporting regional economic development plans in rural areas. If selected,

points will be awarded to listed projects and recognized by USDA for Rural Development funding. Applications are due **September 30**. Click [here](#) for more information.

- 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](#).

## Events and Trainings

- Registration is open for [“Strengthening Economies in Colorado: A Forum for Coal Reliant Communities”](#) scheduled next week for **September 19 and 20 in Delta, CO** and hosted by NACo and the NADO Research Foundation with the support of U.S. EDA. 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 Colorado and the Western regions. Click [here](#) to view the draft agenda and register.
- The [USDA](#) has announced a **series of listening sessions through the Rural Development Innovation Center on four Rural Development loan guarantee programs**. These listening sessions will begin the process of increasing capital in rural areas. The listening sessions are being held between **September 10-20** and can be attended virtually. More information can be found [here](#).
- [Broadband USA](#) is hosting a webinar on **September 19 at 2 p.m. ET** to discuss new, emerging and **innovative wireless technologies currently being tested and/or deployed** to address rural broadband challenges. Click [here](#) to register.
- The [Center for Creative Land Recycling](#) is hosting the National Brownfields Leadership Summit in **Washington, DC on September 25 and 26**. This event will bring together top leaders from across the redevelopment industry with key decision

makers to discuss **the latest in redevelopment policies, programs, and funding opportunities**. Click [here](#) to learn more and to register.

- [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

- Drax, the largest power plant in Western Europe, is on track to convert to natural gas and biomass by 2023, reports the *BBC*. From the article: **“Drax has tried to rebrand itself as a poster boy for what can be done with an old coal plant – where there’s enough will and, indeed, money to pay for conversions**. Many small coal facilities in the US have recently converted to burning gas – a cheaper kind of transition than biomass. And Drax wants to build large batteries on site to store electricity for when the grid needs it most. There are other, similar projects around the world. A Canadian firm, Hydrostor, has designed schemes for turning old coal plants into compressed air batteries. The air can be released to force the plant’s turbines back into action whenever electricity is needed.” Click [here](#) to read the article.

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