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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](#). 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. 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

- Like many other coal communities across the country, **the small city of Craig, Colorado is navigating efforts to diversify its economy while continuing to support the coal industry that has provided jobs and security for years**, reports the *Gazette*. From the article: ““We understand technologies are going to change the fossil fuels industries that we’ve relied on for the past 40 years,” [says Craig mayor John Ponikvar] “but we have time. It won’t go away overnight. We still have another 20 years to prepare...You can either take change and embrace it and adjust to it, or die...That’s where we’re at right now. I think more people in our community are starting to understand that.”” Click [here](#) to read the article.
- Earlier this month, the University of Virginia’s College at Wise **opened the Nest, a new collaborative entrepreneurial incubator space for students, faculty, and local entrepreneurs**, reports the *Times-News*. From the article: “UVa-Wise Chancellor Donna P. Henry said “really, it’s our goal to involve our students” in entrepreneurial innovation. Essentially, it’s a think tank with a focus on business. She said the concept for The Nest was borrowed from a similar program in Charlottesville “for students to come, be thoughtful and support their entrepreneurial work, and interact with employers.” Click [here](#) to read the article.
- **Companies in Wyoming that have traditionally served the coal industry are diversifying their services to become more resilient** to changes in the energy market, reports the *Gillette News Record*. From the article: “Marva Craft, co-owner of Craftco, estimated that 75 to 80 percent of her company’s clients were firms in the coal industry. Therefore, when coal markets declined in 2013 and 2014, Craftco found its business declining also. That forced the company to adapt. “We started working back then on diversification,” Craft said...“We definitely had to tool up to accommodate new customers,” Craft said. “And that has been a process.” That process involved selling machines and equipment, and buying new equipment to meet the needs of clients in different industries.” Click [here](#) to read the article.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has announced it will **extend the whitewater rafting season for the Russell Fork tributary of the Big Sandy River for two additional weeks in an effort to boost tourism and economic development** in the Eastern Kentucky region, reports the *Lexington Herald-Leader*. From the article: “One of the communities most likely to benefit from the extended season is Pike County’s Elkhorn City, the former home of the Russell Fork Rendezvous, a kayaking and music festival held on the fourth weekend of October, when the Russell Fork is at its highest.” Click [here](#) to read the article.
- Last week, **NACo and the NADO Research Foundation hosted “Strengthening Economies in Colorado: A Forum for Coal-Reliant Communities” in Delta, Colorado**. This event brought together a mix of stakeholders from the public and private sectors to share best practices, lessons learned, and new opportunities to support economic diversification and other economic development efforts. Over the course of two days, participants came together for presentations, networking

sessions, and tours to learn from each other and nurture partnerships. Presentations materials are available [here](#). Contact Jack Morgan at jmorgan@naco.org or Brett Schwartz at bschwartz@nado.org with any questions or follow-up.

Funding Opportunities and Resources

- 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](#).
- [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**.
- 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

- Registration is open for “Strengthening Economies in Wyoming: A Forum for Coal-Reliant Communities,” scheduled for **October 8 and 9 in Gillette, Wyoming** and hosted by NACo and the NADO Research Foundation. This **free event will include a mix of interactive sessions and small group discussions and mobile tours designed to deepen and foster new partnerships aimed at promoting innovation and prosperity throughout Wyoming and the West.** This forum is funded through the support of the U.S. Economic Development Administration – Denver Regional Office, as part of NACo and NADO RF’s larger four-state initiative “Strengthening Economies in the West,” which provides tailored economic diversification support and technical assistance for coal-reliant counties and regions in Colorado, Montana, Utah, Wyoming. Click [here](#) to learn more and register.
- Created as part of the 2017 federal tax reform, the new **Opportunity Zones program is designed to drive long-term capital to distressed communities by providing tax benefits for investments in Opportunity Funds.** Its massive scale and flexible design has the potential to dramatically shift the status quo in communities that struggle to attract capital but, at the same time, many questions remain about whether the program has sufficient protections in place to ensure that funds truly flow to the communities most in need. Join the [Center for Community Progress](#) for a free webinar on **September 27 at 1 p.m. ET** that will provide a high-level overview of what Opportunity Zones are, how the program is structured, and a sense of the anticipated benefits and potential pitfalls as this enormous new mechanism for neighborhood revitalization gets underway. 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

- The *New York Times* reports on a bi-partisan effort to grow coding and tech jobs in Eastern Kentucky as part of a larger diversification strategy to address the loss of coal jobs. One example is Interapt, a tech startup out of Louisville that provides training for IT jobs. From the article: "The stories of these Interapt graduates in the green hamlets of eastern Kentucky begin with dead ends and end with new beginnings. "Nights I was manning the reception desk at Super 8, for \$7.50 an hour, and days I was working at Little Caesars and still struggling to pay family bills," Shea Maynard told me. Now, she said, "I'm modifying the information architecture of Interapt products." She continued, "**I never thought it was possible for a person like me to have a career I love.**" Click [here](#) to read the article.



This newsletter is made possible with the support of a [US Economic Development Administration – Denver Regional Office](#) POWER grant to the [National Association of Counties](#) and the [National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation](#). The views and opinions expressed by other organizations or outside publications referenced in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of NACo, NADO RF, or EDA.