

November 7, 2018



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. 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

- The coal community of Tazewell, VA is experiencing a rebirth thanks to the branding and marketing of 32 miles of Route 16 as a motorcycle tourist attraction, reports the *New York Times*. From the article: “Last year **an estimated 60,000 motorcycle and sports car enthusiasts came through town, up from 16,000 in 2013**, said David Woodard, the director of community development for Tazewell County. Four restaurants have opened on Tazewell’s Main Street since 2017. Tazewell, population 4,240, is a prime example of a southwest Virginia coalfield town converting to what Chris Cannon, executive director of the economic development group Friends of Southwest Virginia, calls the creative economy. Click [here](#) to read the article.
- **Colorado Western Slope communities will soon be serviced by many new solar installations that are planned for the area**, reports the *Daily Sentinel*. From the article: “[S]olar power generated at the 32 and C roads site will offset an estimated \$1 million in electricity costs over 20 years for Grand Junction Regional Airport. Power from the site south of Palisade will offset all of the electricity costs for the town of De Beque.” Click [here](#) to read the article.
- **EntreEd America’s Entrepreneurial Schools program, which last year served over 40,000 K-12 students in seven states, has expanded to include two Eastern Kentucky counties, Letcher and Harlan**, reports the *EntreEd News Room*. From the article: “Letcher Middle School introduced entrepreneurship into homeroom lessons to reach every student and will host an entrepreneurial fair this week where students will be tasked with solving a problem and providing a service/product for their local community. Arlie Boggs Elementary introduced entrepreneurship in every grade level, with students participating in activities around assembly lines, cost management, prototyping and testing, pitching a product, and more. Evarts Elementary School in Harlan County...created an online platform with entrepreneurship resources and lessons. Students participated in a variety of activities, from engaging in creative problem solving to pitching ideas to school administrators in a “Shark Tank” activity.” Click [here](#) to read the article.
- The Utah Center for Rural Health has received funding from the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy **to address opioid-related challenges in Beaver, Emery, and Carbon counties**, reports *Iron County Today*. From the article: “The goal of [a rural consortium funded by the grant] will be to work together in order to avoid duplication of services, maximizing the assets already in place in rural communities, as well as to utilize the individual strengths of the consortium members to improve the care available to those with an opioid use disorder...Southern Utah’s rural communities will be better able to plan for the future, identifying existing gaps in rural health coverage to better allocate future funds for fighting the opioid crisis in more effective ways.” Click [here](#) to read the article.
- The Next Generation Aerospace Conference in Huntington, West Virginia addressed opportunities to grow and sustain the industry in West Virginia, Kentucky, an Ohio, reports the *Herald-Dispatch*. From the article: [Brad Hall, vice president of external affairs with Appalachian Power (AEP)] said... “[R]esearch [from a new study] showed **that coal miners, many of**

whom have lost their jobs due to recent mine closings, have the skills that aerospace and advanced manufacturing companies need...The study, which was funded in part with Kentucky Power economic development grants, concluded that the region had eight times the national average of skilled metalworkers, recognizing the potential of the aerospace industry to diversify the central Appalachian economy." Click [here](#) to read the article.

- The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* takes a look at how the **drywall manufacturing industry has been impacted by the closure of coal-fired power plants which produce calcium sulphate (natural gypsum rock)** as a byproduct of the burning process. From the article: "Seeing an opportunity when the use of air pollution systems expanded, the wallboard industry began locating plants right next to coal plants that were outfitted with the sulfur dioxide-removal technology in the 1990s. They signed long-term contracts with their new neighbors for synthetic gypsum supply...By 2010, 45 percent of U.S. wallboard was made with synthetic gypsum, according to the Gypsum Association, an industry trade group. The percentage has remained roughly the same over the last eight years. Now, the decline of coal-fired energy in the U.S. has strained that symbiotic relationship." Click [here](#) to read the article.

Funding Opportunities and Resources

- [NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association](#) is **accepting applications for the Smart Rural Community Collaboration Challenge through December 1**. Grants will provide up to \$5,000 to support the development and deployment of innovative broadband-enabled solutions to support rural commerce and economic development, education, energy, health care, public safety, or other community-oriented initiatives. Click [here](#) to learn more and apply.
- [Rural LISC's](#) Community Facilities Fund **provides capital to help develop and improve essential community facilities in rural areas**, including health care centers, hospitals, educational facilities, and other facilities in rural communities with populations under 20,000. Click [here](#) to learn more about the Fund and apply.
- The [Treasury Department](#) and the [Internal Revenue Service](#) **have issued proposed regulations and other published guidance for the new Opportunity Zone tax incentive**. Opportunity Zones, created by the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, were designed to spur investment in distressed communities throughout the country through tax benefits. Under a nomination process completed in June, 8,761 communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories were designated as qualified Opportunity Zones. Opportunity Zones retain their designation for 10 years. Click [here](#) to learn more.
- [USDA Rural Development \(USDA-RD\)](#) released a **new guide designed to help rural communities access federal funds and resources to address the opioid misuse epidemic**. This resource is the first deliverable resulting from the Rural Opioid

Federal Interagency Working Group, created by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and USDA-RD. You can access the resource [here](#).

- The [Appalachia Funders Network](#) and the [Central Appalachian Network \(CAN\)](#) have identified healthy food access as a critical priority for the region's communities and economy. Over the past two years, these organizations have worked together to **conduct and publish six case studies of projects at the intersection of local food systems, food security, and health**. Several members of the Appalachia Funders Network helped fund the work to document and highlight lessons from innovative projects around the region, while CAN conducted research and interviews and compiled the case studies. Click [here](#) to learn more.
- [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.

Events and Trainings

- On **November 8** the [Mountain Women Mean Business](#) event in **Harlan, KY will highlight women-led businesses that are leading the charge for an economic transition and diversified economy**. The goal of the event is to support, uplift, and empower women across the region in all of their endeavors with sessions that will focus on forming a business, finance, managing technology, growing revenue streams, and much more. Click [here](#) to register and learn more.
- The Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition is hosting a webinar on **November 13 from 1 – 2 p.m. ET to mark the release of its collaborative, multistate report on innovative mine reclamation in Central Appalachia**. The report highlights 20 innovative economic development projects that have abandoned mined land clean up components. The report provides specific new economic impact data on these projects, which can be adapted, replicated, and scaled across the region. Click [here](#) to learn more and register (note: this webinar was rescheduled from October 30).
- Broadband connectivity is critical for many reasons, including access to quality healthcare. From remote patient monitoring to mobile health applications accessed via smartphones, tablets, or other devices, advances in telemedicine and telehealth technologies have impacted patient care and health outcomes far away from hospitals and doctors' offices. Connected-care services significantly reduce economic and administrative costs for patients and health care providers. Join [NTIA's Broadband USA](#) for a webinar on **November 14 at 2 p.m. ET to explore innovations in telehealth and telemedicine applications and**

programs that two leading universities have developed to improve patient health in their states, especially in rural and remote areas. Click [here](#) to register.

- Join the [Orton Family Foundation](#) on **November 14 at 1 p.m. ET** for a webinar about **how millennials who chose to live in small cities are defying conventional wisdom about so-called “brain drain” from rural America.** Ben Winchester, an expert on rural migration, will set the stage for an insightful discussion with three millennials who are contributing to the vibrancy of the places they live in a big way. Click [here](#) to learn more and register.
- [Enterprise Community Partners](#) is hosting a webinar on **November 15 at 1 p.m. ET** that will feature its Community Engagement Toolkit, a new resource brings together more than 40 resources to **assist and enable effective community engagement.** Click [here](#) to learn more and to register.
- [HUD](#) and the [True Colors Fund](#) are hosting two webinars with the same content to discuss how your community can create authentic and **meaningful partnerships with youth who have experienced housing instability or homelessness.** Click [here](#) to register for the **November 13** webinar (2-4 p.m. ET) and [here](#) to register for the **November 15** webinar (3-5 p.m. ET).
- The [Environmental Finance Center Network](#) is hosting a variety **of free webinars for small water systems** in November. Click the links to learn more and to register: [Grant Writing 101 \(November 8\)](#), [Collecting Break Data: Why, How, and What For \(November 13\)](#), and [Regional Development Organizations: Supporting Water Infrastructure and Improving Quality of Life \(November 15\)](#).
- [LISC](#) has announced a **six-part webinar series called “How to Do Creative Placemaking”** that will run from **November through April.** Creative placemaking—the practice of integrating arts, culture, and design activities into efforts that strengthen communities—has become a widespread practice in communities of all shapes and sizes to advance local economic, physical, and/or social outcomes. Webinars will cover topics such as building partnerships, community engagement, measuring impact, communicating success, hiring & contracting artists, and more. Click [here](#) to learn more and 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

- **Wyoming's craft brewery and distillery scene is taking shape despite the economic and geographic challenges that exist in this low-population state without a major urban center**, reports the *New Food Economy*. From the article: "The movement is about building processing infrastructure locally and keeping money circulating in home communities, no matter how modest their size. It's symbolic of an attitude that hasn't been prevalent in Wyoming since WWII, though even then it was hanging on by a thread: an ethos of family-owned businesses that buy raw material locally, add value, and serve local customers. Even when products are sent over the border for sale, they're shipped fully finished—so the money comes back home." Click [here](#) to read the article.

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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.