

December 5, 2018



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

- **Universities, elected officials, regional organizations, and other key stakeholders in Utah have come together to assemble the Utah Coal Country Strike Team** with the goal of supporting Carbon and Emery counties in the areas of workforce development, housing, tourism, and more, reports *Utah Business*. Click [here](#) to read the article. Last week, the Strike Team **was chosen as one of three finalists from Utah** to compete in Phoenix at the American Dream Ideas Challenge in January for up to \$1 million in funding from Schmidt Futures. Click [here](#) to read the press release from the University of Utah.
- An effort is underway to **connect Southwest Virginia's New River and Roanoke Valleys through a trails system**, reports *WSLS*. From the article: "[Says Kevin Byrd, executive director of the New River Valley Regional Commission], "The benefits are multifold. It's unbelievable when you look at trails and the use of them. The numbers are really up over the past few years. There are health benefits. There are economic benefits. People coming in to use the trails and then going to have lunch....or spend the weekend."" Click [here](#) to read the article and watch the news segment.
- Academics in England have **patented a system called "deep farming" and say that abandoned coal mines provide the perfect infrastructure for building these farms**, reports *Popular Mechanics*. From the article: "Potential crops include lettuces and leafy greens like spinach and kale, herbs like basil and mint, strawberries, mushrooms, carrots, eggplants, and a wide variety of others. Deep farming would incorporate many existing technologies—hydroponic planters with nutrient-rich water, aeroponic plants growing with a mist, and LED units to create photosynthesis. And if they can use groundwater and be located close to the communities they serve, deep farms could reduce the CO2 emissions of farming and cut down on transportation costs at the same time." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- **Wyoming and West Virginia's similar challenges with outmigration, labor force decline, and educational attainment** are compared in the *Wall Street Journal*. From the article: "In Wyoming and West Virginia, dependence on coal means that during an energy bust, many discouraged workers leave. But unlike states with more diverse economies, these two don't have enough other sources of employment to hold steady or grow to compensate for the decline in mining and related industries...While the labor-force decline in both Wyoming and West Virginia has moderated over the past year, possibly tied to a pickup in energy prices, a full recovery remains a challenge." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- *Energy Transition* takes a **closer look at what opportunities may be available to support coal workers when plants close in South Africa's coal-producing region, the Mpumalanga Province**. From the article: "When it comes to planning for the job losses that'll inevitably happen as a result of old power stations being mothballed, and new ones being scaled down, [Jesse Burton from the University of Cape Town's Energy Resource Centre] says that policymakers need a more holistic plan than merely catering for the retirement of older workers who will eventually be given the golden handshake. Many of these

mines and heavy industries need semiskilled and skilled workers, and are actively involved in training people with the necessary skills to fill these posts. Mines are ideally placed to train people with transferable skills, so that when jobs in mining and manufacturing decline, workers can move across to other industries.” Click [here](#) to read the article.

Funding Opportunities and Resources

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has **released application guidance for Fiscal Year 2019 brownfields grant funding**. Funding guidelines are available [here](#). Last year, the EPA awarded \$54.3 million for brownfields assessment and cleanup of a total of 144 communities across the county. For FY 2019, a total of \$50 million is expected to be awarded to more than 100 recipients. The EPA will host a webinar on **December 11, 2018 at 2 p.m. ET**. Participants can access the webinar [here](#). The deadline to submit proposals is **January 31, 2019**.
- The [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#) has **launched a new special initiative, Accelerating Promising Practices for Small Libraries (APP)**, and is accepting grant applications now through **February 25, 2019**. This funding opportunity is designed to strengthen the ability of small and rural libraries, archives, and related organizations to serve their communities. Award sizes range from \$10,000 to \$50,000. Click [here](#) to learn more and apply.
- The [Safe Routes to Parks Activating Communities program](#) is now accepting applications and will award eleven grantee communities in 2019. The **Safe Routes to Parks Activating Communities program provides tailored technical assistance for communities to develop action plans, and awards \$12,500 to each community** to begin implementation of those plans. The action plans will be based upon the Safe Routes to Parks Action Framework, developed in 2017 through the collaborative efforts of the Safe Routes to School National Partnership and the National Recreation and Parks Association. Apply by **December 10, 2018**. Click [here](#) to learn more.
- [HRSA/FORHP](#) has **announced a second round of the Rural Communities Opioid Response Program**. The purpose of the program is to support treatment for, and prevention of, substance use disorder – including opioid use disorder – in rural communities. In FY18, HRSA made 95 awards and in FY19, HRSA anticipates making approximately 120 awards. The current awardees can be found on the [HRSA website](#). Any domestic organization forming a consortium of four or more members in a rural community may be eligible to apply for funding. More information on eligibility and requirements can be found in the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#). Interested applicants may attend a live [technical assistance webinar](#) on **Friday, December 7, 2018 from 2 – 3 p.m. ET**. Applications are due on **January 15, 2019**, with a program start date of June 1, 2019. Please contact ruralopioidresponse@hrsa.gov with additional questions.
- 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.

- The [Federal Reserve](#) is currently conducting its [Small Business Credit Survey](#). Please **reach out to small businesses in your region and encourage them to participate** by **December 21, 2018**. The survey will take approximately nine minutes and includes questions about business conditions, financing needs, and credit experiences. Summary results will be shared with participants, and all responses are confidential. The survey will provide critical information that service providers, policymakers, and lenders use to improve programs for small business owners. Click [here](#) for the survey link.
- A new report from the [National 4-H Council](#) **seeks to answer the question: What are the circumstances in rural communities that help young people advance economically?** *“Social Mobility in America: Insights from Communities Whose Young People Are Climbing the Income Ladder”* explores upward mobility in rural America, and provides a close-up view in a handful of rural communities where young people are readily making their way up the income ladder. Click [here](#) to learn more and access the report.
- The [American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy](#) has released a new report, “Reaching Rural Communities with Energy Efficiency Programs.” This report **highlights six energy efficiency programs serving rural areas**. It describes trends across programs for rural customers and offers recommendations to help utilities and other stakeholders better serve these communities. Click [here](#) to download the report.
- A report from the Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition **shares a variety of case studies of innovative mine reclamation in Central Appalachia**. This report seeks to spur innovative economic development throughout Appalachia in communities where the landscape has been irreparably changed by coal mining. Specifically, the report provides case studies of projects that advance community development amidst abandoned mine lands. Click [here](#) to download the report.

Events and Trainings

- The [North Central Regional Center for Economic Development](#) is hosting a webinar on **December 7 at 2 p.m. ET** that will feature **Sam Quinones, journalist and author of “Dreamland: The True Tale of America’s Opiate Epidemic.”** Click [here](#) to learn more.
- After relying on a coal-mining for over a century, Delta County, CO lost two of its three major mines in 2016—a moment that many locals now refer to as “the shock.” In response, **local leaders learned to develop strategic partnerships and build an**

economic development strategy that the community believes in. From coworking and incubators, to providing equipment and educational opportunities, leaders in Delta County today are helping existing businesses and new entrepreneurs work together to expand, grow, and repair their local economy. Join [Community Builders](#) on **December 19 at 2 p.m. ET** for a webinar that will share Delta County's story. Click [here](#) to learn and to register.

- On **January 15 and 23**, the [WV Community Development Hub's](#) Director of Strategic Network Communications Emma Pepper will lead **two online trainings to support West Virginians working for the greater good in sharing their story with the world.** If you're with a small business or social enterprise, a nonprofit or community group, or are a West Virginian change-maker of any stripe, check out these workshops on promoting your work and getting noticed by the media. Click [here](#) to learn more and to register.
- [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.
- 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 popular videogame "Fallout 76" **takes place in a post-apocalyptic West Virginia and researchers are now set to investigate how the game influences players' views and opinions of the state and how it may impact tourism**, reports the *Register-Herald*. From the article: "Supported by the WVU Humanities Center, the study aims to understand how representations of the Mountain State impact the people of the state..." "In media over the years, West Virginians have been stereotyped as being backwards and uneducated," [Jaime Banks, associate professor at West Virginia University and one of the researchers] said. "But Fallout 76 seems to flip that script. They built this fallout shelter and survived. Now they're the saviors of humanity." 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.