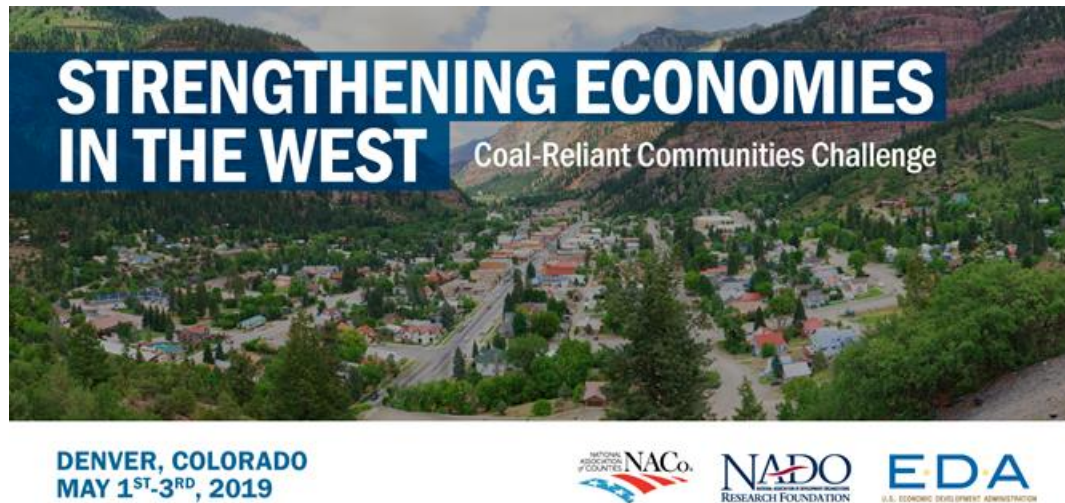


February 13, 2019



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!



Registration is now open for NACo and NADO RF's "[Strengthening Economies in the West: Coal-Reliant Communities Challenge](#)," scheduled for **May 1-3 in Denver, CO**. This **hands-on, interactive forum will bring together local/regional teams from Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, and Montana** to learn more about economic diversification planning and strategies, build out a diversification road-map, network with peers from across the four-state region, and engage with staff from a mix of federal agencies focused on diversification and economic resilience. Click [here](#) for more information and to apply by **March 1**. This event is supported by the EDA Denver Regional Office. Questions? Contact Jack Morgan at [jmorgan@naco.org](mailto:jmorgan@naco.org).

## Economic Diversification News

- The *Daily Sentinel* reports on **new research that takes a closer look at economic distress in Appalachian Ohio which finds positive trends for many of these counties, though large structural challenges still exist**. From the article: "Jason Hamman, Monroe County's economic development representative, said the loss of an aluminum plant and job losses in the coal mining industry contributed to the county's economic distress over the years. However, Hamman said that in 2013, shale gas became a boon for Southern and Eastern Ohio and offset some of the job loss in Monroe County. He added that pipeline construction and other large projects related to the energy industry has Monroe County trending in a positive direction." Click [here](#) to read the article.

- An opinion piece in the *Salt Lake Tribune* argues for **Utah to explore more incentives to attract film, television, and commercial productions to the state, particularly for rural regions**. From the piece: "Under Utah's incentive, filmmakers can receive a tax rebate for up to a quarter of what they spend here. It is about average as far as incentives go in surrounding states. But the incentive is capped at about \$8.3 million per year, an amount that can get sucked up by just a few large productions. Georgia, by contrast, gave \$800 million in tax breaks in the most recent year, but attracted enough films that the governor's office estimates it generated \$9.2 billion for the state's economy... [T]hese film incentives can bring dollars to Utah's rural counties, like Kane County, which frankly haven't shared equally in the state's robust economic growth." Click [here](#) to read the piece.
- *Energy News Network* **profiles the small city of Owensboro, KY where Owensboro Municipal Utilities (OMU) has announced plans to shutter two coal-fired power plants in the next few years**. From the article: "[T]he energy transition unfolding in this old city, which has experienced the closing and opening of every economic era in America, is both more complicated and more encouraging than the widespread job losses and civic desolation that characterize coal plant shutdowns in other Ohio River Valley towns. OMU's decision to replace coal with a cleaner and less expensive mix of generating technologies is the newest feature of the city's intentional economic evolution from fossil-power-hungry manufacturing to a prosperous center of tourism and energy-efficient professional and financial services." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- Mesa County, CO's electric co-op **Grand Valley Power has announced plans to move towards 60% renewable energy by 2030**, reports the *Grand Junction Sentinel*. From the article: "The organization surpassed Colorado's statutory Renewable Energy Standard of 10 percent renewable energy by 2020 roughly 10 years ago. Currently, the company uses coal for 43 percent of its energy, natural gas for 27 percent and renewable energy for 30 percent, which consists of wind, solar power and hydroelectric. By 2030, coal use is expected to shrink to 18 percent and natural gas to 22 percent. Part of Grand Valley Power's efforts include its solar array near 29 Road and Interstate 70." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- The town of **White Sulphur Springs, WV will receive \$1.5 million in EDA funding to support water infrastructure upgrades**, reports *MetroNews*. From the article: "This investment will help construct a water line to assist with the development of two facilities; a barrel manufacturing plant and a related lumber mill and the project will support the local tourism industry by providing the Greenbrier State Forest with a potable water source." Click [here](#) to read the article.

## Funding Opportunities and Educational Resources

- [EPA's Environmental Justice Small Grants \(EJSG\) Program](#) provides **funding directly to community-based organizations for projects that help residents of underserved communities understand and address local environmental and public**

**health issues.** Projects should engage, educate, and empower communities to better understand local environmental and public health issues and develop strategies for addressing those issues, building consensus in the community, and setting community priorities. Applications are due **February 15, 2019**. Click [here](#) for more information.

- 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.
- Every year, [Community Builders](#) offers a **limited number of community assistance opportunities in Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, New Mexico, and Colorado**. This is an opportunity for local leaders to acquire necessary tools and information to build prosperous, livable communities. A competitive process is used to identify projects with a high likelihood of success. Projects should address a compelling need or opportunity, have clear and realistic goals, demonstrate buy-in and support of key partners and leadership, while offering a strong prospect for implementation. Apply by **March 1**. Click [here](#) to learn more.
- To support the efforts of leaders in cities, states, and regions across the country, the [Partnership to Advance Youth Apprenticeship \(PAYA\)](#) seeks applicants for the [PAYA Grant Initiative](#). **Sites selected to receive grants will form the core of a visible national community of innovators at the forefront of the movement to expand participation in high-quality youth apprenticeship programs** that produce equitable outcomes for students, employers, and communities. PAYA is looking to support both partnerships in cities, states, and regions working to launch new youth apprenticeship programs and practitioners who are already leading existing high-quality programs to expand the reach or improve the outcomes of their programs. Apply by **March 8**. Click [here](#) for more information and to apply.
- The Economic Development Administration (EDA) is now accepting applications for the [2019 Regional Innovation Strategies \(RIS\) Program](#). The [RIS Program](#) offers funding through two competitions:
  - **FY19 i6 Challenge**—catalyzing high-growth entrepreneurship throughout the country, the i6 Challenge awards up to \$750,000 for projects that increase regional capacity to accelerate the translation of innovations, ideas, intellectual property, and research into products, services, companies, and jobs.
  - **FY19 Seed Fund Support (SFS) Grant Competition**—unlocking risk capital for entrepreneurs and startups to grow, SFS grants provide up to \$300,000 for projects that create, launch, or expand equity-based seed funds or that create networks and tools that enable capital to flow into high-growth startups in all parts of the U.S.For information on eligibility and how to apply visit EDA's [Regional Innovation Strategies webpage](#) for details on upcoming RIS webinars, frequently asked questions, previous awardees, and to read the official [Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) in its entirety. All applications to the 2019 RIS Program competitions must be submitted no later than **April 4**.

- The [Appalachian Regional Commission \(ARC\)](#) is now **accepting applications for the 2019 round of the Partnership for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) Initiative**. The 2019 Request for Proposals (RFP) is available [here](#). Completed applications are due no later than **April 10, 2019 at 5 p.m. ET**. Approximately \$45 million will be awarded through this competitive grant process. In FY 2019, ARC's POWER Initiative will continue focusing on regional investments that maximize economic revitalization in the Appalachian region's coal-impacted communities. ARC has awarded \$120 million to date through the POWER Initiative in order to help coal-impacted communities in [309 Appalachian counties](#) diversify and grow their economies. POWER project summaries detailing past awardees' action plans are available [here](#). With questions about the POWER Initiative, email [power@arc.gov](mailto:power@arc.gov).
- The [U.S. Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) Office of Rural Development](#) has announced the [ReConnect program](#) which will **offer up to \$600 million nationwide in loans and grants to help build broadband infrastructure in rural America through a new pilot program**. The loans and grants will consist of \$200 million in grants, \$200 million in low-interest loans, and \$200 million in loan and grant combinations. Projects funded through this initiative must serve communities with fewer than 20,000 people that have no broadband service or where existing service is slower than 10 megabits per second (mbps) download and 1 mbps upload. To qualify, projects must increase access speeds to at least 25 mbps upload and 3 mbps download. Priority will be given to projects that propose to deliver higher-capacity connections to rural homes, businesses, and farms. The start of the application window will be announced in February 2019. Applications **must be received by April 29, 2019, for grant funding, by May 29, 2019, for combined loan and grant funding, and by June 28, 2019, for loan funding**. The USDA will host a series of webinars and in-person workshops to share information and answer questions about the program. The full list of public events will be made available soon on the [ReConnect Program resource portal](#).
- "Strengthening Economic Resilience in Appalachia: A Guidebook for Practitioners" is a new publication prepared for the [Appalachian Regional Commission](#). It contains **case studies from counties in the Appalachian region and across the country that offer insight into how communities have rebounded from the Recession and other economic disruptions** in mining, manufacturing, hospitality, education, transportation, or similar industries. Click [here](#) to access the guidebook.
- [Headwaters Economics](#) has compiled **new research that demonstrates Recreation counties, especially in non-metro places, draw new residents and have higher incomes and faster earnings growth than places without recreation**. Recreation appears to drive varied economic benefits, including short-term support for tourism-related businesses and longer-term support by recruiting new residents who may be business owners, entrepreneurs, or workers. Click [here](#) to view the findings.
- [The Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire](#) has released a new brief, "Rural Depopulation in a Rapidly Urbanizing America." The research **shows that nearly 35 percent of rural counties in the United States are**

**experiencing protracted and significant population loss.** Those counties are now home to 6.2 million residents, a third fewer than lived there in 1950. In all, the authors report that 746 counties representing 24 percent of all U.S. counties are depopulating and 91 percent of them are rural. In contrast, just 9 percent of urban counties are depopulating. Click [here](#) to access the brief.

- The [Northern Arizona Council of Governments \(NACOG\) Economic Development District](#) is made up of four counties in Northern Arizona – Apache, Coconino, Navajo and Yavapai. Three of the four counties (Apache, Coconino and Navajo) are impacted by the downturn of the coal industry. Several coal-driven industries are facing imminent closure in 2019, resulting in the loss of an estimated 2,000 jobs and multi-million dollar economic impacts for the District and State. Led by NACOG Economic Development Council and workforce leaders with the assistance from Arizona’s Office of Economic Opportunities, the Northern Arizona Regional Alliance Coalition has developed a [white paper describing the economic impact of the coal industry closure and opportunities for workforce development, training, and broader economic diversification](#). Click [here](#) to download the white paper, “Northern Arizona Coal Communities Workforce Initiatives.”
- The [Western Governors’ Association \(WGA\)](#) is seeking input from stakeholders in the West. WGA represents the governors of 19 Western states and 3 U.S.-flag islands. *Reimagining the Rural West* is the central policy initiative of incoming WGA Chair, North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum. ***Reimagining the Rural West* will explore how governors can support vibrant and enduring rural communities by enhancing economic development, infrastructure, and quality of life.** The initiative will identify common challenges and opportunities, highlight best practices and success stories, and provide a forum for the development of bipartisan policy solutions. WGA is seeking responses to a [survey](#) to help scope the initiative before the June 2019 kickoff. Anyone with experience and expertise in rural community and economic development in the West is encouraged to submit responses. Click [here](#) to download the survey. Please submit any surveys you complete or receive to Lauren DeNinno at [ldeninno@westgov.org](mailto:ldeninno@westgov.org).
- [AARP](#) has released an “Economic Development Workbook,” the [sixth book](#) in the AARP Roadmap to Livability Collection. By introducing the economic benefits of making a community more livable, **this publication illustrates how livability principles contribute to and enhance a community’s economic performance.** The information in the workbook is not meant to replace a community’s existing economic development strategies. Instead, the facts and examples provided can help people who are working on livability projects to be effective communicators about how an investment in livability can benefit the community and support complementary initiatives. It includes an assessment exercise that will help a team create a more vibrant, desirable, and competitive environment for residential and commercial investments. Click [here](#) to access the workbook.
- [RHIHub](#) has created the [Rural Philanthropy Toolkit](#) that **compiles emerging practices and resources to support rural communities seeking to build relationships with philanthropies across the United States.** The toolkit presents practical

strategies that can help rural communities build successful partnerships with philanthropies. In particular, it focuses on: preparing for partnerships with philanthropies; conducting outreach to philanthropies; and establishing and sustaining partnerships with philanthropies. Click [here](#) to access the toolkit.

- [Brookings](#) has released a new [report](#), “Automation and Artificial Intelligence: How Machines Are Affecting People and Places.” Intended to bring often-inscrutable trends down to earth, **the report develops both backward and forward-looking analyses of the impacts of automation over the years 1980 to 2016 and 2016 to 2030 to assess past and upcoming trends as they affect both people and communities in the United States.** The report focuses on areas of potential occupational change rather than net employment losses or gains. Special attention is applied to digging beneath national top-line statistics to explore industry, geographical, and demographic variations. Finally, the report concludes by suggesting a comprehensive response framework for national and state-local policymakers. Click [here](#) to read the report.
- The [Center for Growth and Opportunity at Utah State University](#) has published a new [policy paper](#), “Cooperative Conservation: Determinants of Landowner Engagement in Saving Endangered Species.” **It analyzes surveys of private landowners to better understand factors that deter them from engaging in conservation efforts and to identify policy changes that could increase engagement.** The authors find that landowners want to be involved in conservation and to be known as good stewards of their land. The current approach to conserving endangered species, however, often discourages landowners from getting involved in conservation. The results also suggest that landowners are more motivated to help endangered species when conservation efforts are less punitive, more cooperative, and led by non-regulatory local agencies. Click [here](#) to read the paper.

## Events and Trainings

- Retail is shrinking, storefronts sit empty, and residents are underemployed. You know that the demand for retail and office space is changing, but you're not sure what comes next. You worry about how to prevent young people from leaving town due to a lack of good paying jobs locally. Join the [NADO Research Foundation](#) and Ilana Preuss, Founder and CEO of [Recast City LLC](#), on **February 19 at 2 p.m. ET** for a [free webinar](#) that will **explore how supporting small-scale manufacturing in your region can address some of these challenges by creating new opportunities for residents, and fostering a sense of place and hometown pride.** You'll hear how communities across the country are working with small-scale manufacturing businesses to help increase local employment, attract investment into target neighborhoods, and build inclusive economic opportunity. You'll also learn the benefits of incorporating small-scale manufacturing initiatives into your regional economic development and workforce development planning efforts. Click [here](#) to register.

- Join the [Center for Creative Land Recycling](#) on **February 27 at 2 p.m. ET** for the webinar “Proactive Communication and Conflict Resolution for Redevelopment.” Conflict is part of human existence, and there’s no denying that it can be unpleasant, but with tools and perspective from professional facilitators, there’s no reason to be afraid. We have to work through conflict to get to a better outcome, whether that’s a vision for a site or area, an agreement about remediation plans, or anything else. **How can you improve your conflict management and mitigation practices? Come away from this webinar with the skills to plan for and productively manage disagreement.** This webinar builds on a popular panel that was presented at the California Land Recycling Conference in 2018. Click [here](#) to register.
- The [Aspen Institute](#) is webcasting an upcoming event called “All Together Now: Advancing 2Gen Strategies in Rural America” on **February 28 at noon ET**. The **2Gen approach aims to intentionally coordinate and align often-isolated programs for kids and their parents (or grandparents) in ways that help accelerate progress** on three fronts: (1) parents with family-supporting jobs; (2) children meeting developmental milestones; and (3) families able to fully support and promote their children’s development. This session will focus on the how-to’s of designing and supporting effective 2Gen efforts in rural places. Click [here](#) to register for the webcast.
- **The Central Appalachian Brownfields Innovation Network (CABIN) is partnering with the Tennessee Environmental Conference (TNEC) for two and a half days of brownfield and environmental learning and networking opportunities on March 18-20 in Kingsport, TN.** The Central Appalachian Regional Brownfield Summit educates stakeholders from across the region on complex redevelopment issues; provides the opportunity for communities to network with peers, agency representatives, development professionals, and environmental experts in person; and highlights success stories from across the region. The TNEC conference, now in its 18th year, will feature more than 40 presenters addressing the latest trends, practices, and policies aimed at preserving resources, balancing growth, improving human health and protecting the environment – and a special track all about brownfields. Click [here](#) for additional information and to register.
- [Brightfields 2019 – Virginia](#) is an **interactive solar marketplace event that will bring together solar developers, property owners, policy makers, and professionals** for educational sessions, active networking, and live market-making in a 'Solar Market Mixer. The event is designed for (1) landowners, property managers and communities interested in the development of solar energy on their land (rather than rooftops), (2) solar developers seeking land for purchase or lease, (3) public and private sector professionals working in the solar space, (4) anyone motivated towards developing greenfields, greyfields, brownfields, landfills and Superfund sites into solar power generating assets, or (5) anyone seeking to learn more about the application of solar power production onto the land. It will be held **April 9 and 10 in Richmond, VA**. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.
- [LISC](#) has announced a **six-part webinar series called “How to Do Creative Placemaking”** that will run **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 Regional Transportation Conference will be held from June 17-19, 2019 in Columbus, Ohio.** The event provides peer-to-peer learning opportunities for regional transportation planners, state Department of Transportation representatives, and local and private sector partners working with multiple transportation modes. The conference also provides training and networking opportunities and covers a variety of rural and small metropolitan transportation topics. With hands-on workshops, best practice panels, and facilitated networking sessions that feature peer trainers and expert speakers, the conference will offer training for organizations and individuals just beginning to work in transportation, as well as those with more experience. Stay tuned for a call for presentation abstracts and additional information on registration. Visit the [conference website](#) for updates.

## A Dose of Inspiration

- **A team representing the Utah coal counties of Emery and Carbon has advanced to the finals of a \$1 million competition called the Alliance for the American Dream,** reports *Deseret News*. From the article: “The strike team's plan targets four interventions to aid the economically distressed communities, which have struggled since 2001 as coal production has declined and mines have closed...The plan envisions: creating a Silicon Slopes Eastern hub to complement Utah’s rapidly expanding tech sector; building a tourism infrastructure; revitalizing housing stock to increase wealth and create a more attractive community; and establishing customized economic incentives to spur development in the counties.” 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.*