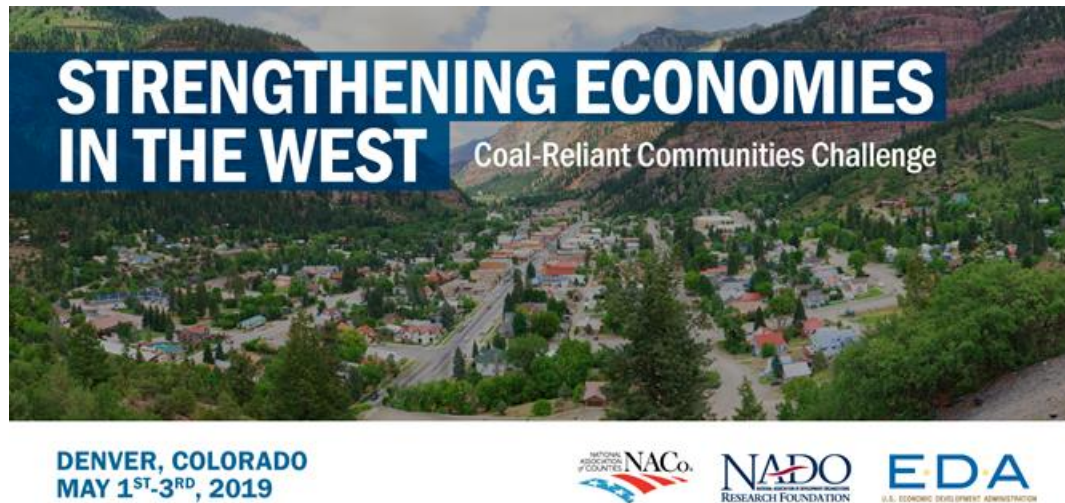


February 27, 2019



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. 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.

Economic Diversification News

- **Southwest Virginia continues to grow its outdoor recreation economy through trail systems, new outfitters, heritage tourism, and more**, reports *Ensisia*. From the article: "Many places, like St. Paul, have turned to outdoor recreation, including paddling, biking, hiking, hunting, fishing, and driving off-road vehicles. Outdoor activities appeal partly because of the region's natural beauty and access to national forests, but also because they complement other economic development efforts... Southwest Virginia's Spearhead Trails emulate the Hatfield-McCoy model in their location on and around former surface mines, and advocates hope to one day link the two systems. Shawn Lindsey, executive director of Spearhead Trails,

says they produce an economic impact of about US\$20 million, and support a growing outdoor recreation industry, including through the traditional off-season." Click [here](#) to read the article.

- **A solar farm has been proposed for development in Wyoming next to the site of a coal-fired power plant unit that recently closed**, reports the *Billings Gazette*. From the article: "Fossil Solar LLC has proposed a 63-megawatt facility outside the town of Kemmerer, with plans to connect that power to the network of transmission serving PacifiCorp's 56-year-old coal plant, Naughton. Kemmerer sits at the crossroads of a changing energy landscape in Wyoming. The community has produced coal for more than 100 years, via the Kemmerer coal mine, but faces uncertainty regarding the future of both the mine - whose owner is in bankruptcy - and the power plant, which could close as early as 2029." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- **The Appalachian Regional Commission has announced the latest recipients of its POWER Initiative** which will support 33 projects to support economic diversification in the region. From the press release: "These 33 awards are projected to create or retain nearly 1,000 jobs, benefit over 3,300 students and workers, and leverage more than \$21.8 million in private investment into manufacturing, agriculture, technology, substance abuse recovery, broadband development, and other industry sectors across coal-impacted communities in nine Appalachian states." Click [here](#) to read the press release and learn more about the projects.
- **A startup company in Utah is looking into how to develop a thorium reactor that could position the state to become a leader in new energy and medical research**, reports *KSL*. From the article: "Coal-producing Emery County could become the global epicenter for research involving molten salt nuclear reactors and medical isotopes used in cutting-edge cancer treatment. The nuclear reactors that use thorium, which is widely occurring in the Earth, and concurrently produce electricity and medical isotopes had a brief run the 1960s at a U.S. Department of Energy laboratory...According to Mike McKee, executive director of the Seven County Infrastructure Coalition, a Utah startup company is developing a thorium reactor as part of a coalition project. McKee, in a presentation Monday to members of the Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environmental Quality Appropriations Subcommittee, said Utah has a chance to host a "premier research facility" to transform molten salt nuclear reactors into a reality, serving thousands of university students and creating thousands of jobs." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- The *St. Clair New-Aegis* reports on an **upcoming mine reclamation project near Birmingham, Alabama that will establish the Grand River Technology Park**. From the article: "The Grand River Technology Park represents a multiphase opportunity to reclaim and transform approximately 105 acres of undeveloped land surrounding and including several pre-1977 abandoned coal mine lands in east Jefferson County. The initial assessment of this project conservatively estimates that 1,200 new employment opportunities that could generate more than an \$85 million impact in the Greater Birmingham Metropolitan area would be achieved." Click [here](#) to read the article.

Funding Opportunities and Educational Resources

- 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 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.

- The [U.S. Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) Rural Development](#) is **accepting applications for grants to establish broadband infrastructure in unserved rural communities**. The [Community Connect Program](#) helps rural communities extend access where broadband service is least likely to be commercially available, but where it can make a tremendous difference in the quality of life for people and businesses. State and local governments, federally-recognized tribes, nonprofits, and for-profit corporations are eligible to apply. Awardees must also use their USDA funding to offer free broadband service to all critical community facilities and a community center in their proposed service area for two years. The minimum grant amount is \$100,000; the maximum amount is \$3 million. Applicants must be able to provide a 15 percent match on the desired grant amount. The deadline to apply is **April 15**. For additional information about the current application window, see the [Funding Opportunity Announcement](#). Applicants are also encouraged to review the [Community Connect Grant Program Application Guide for Fiscal Year 2019](#) for details on how to complete a successful application.
- [AARP](#) is now accepting applications for its [Community Challenge](#) grant program. In 2019, the **grant program will provide funds for community-based “quick-action” projects related to housing, transportation, smart cities and public spaces**. The goal is to spark change and build momentum to improve livability for people of all ages. Applications are due by **April 17** and projects must be completed by November 4. Click [here](#) for more information and to apply.
- The [Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky \(CEDIK\) at the University of Kentucky](#) is **administering scholarships where funding has been provided by the New York Community Trust to Appalachian students seeking education in health or a health-related field**. Because of the shortage of health care providers in the Appalachian region, along with the expected retirement of many physicians and an aging population that demands more health care, the need to educate and then retain young health care professionals is a real priority. Scholarships are allocated for full-time students with a maximum award of \$2,500 per semester. Part-time students are eligible to apply for partial scholarships. Students must be from an ARC defined Appalachian county to be eligible. The 2019-2020 academic year scholarship application period is now open. The application packet must be postmarked by **April 22**. Click [here](#) for more information and to apply.
- The [Central Appalachian Network](#) **has released the “Central Appalachian Clean Energy Policy Toolkit.”** The toolkit encourages advocates to share lessons learned from efforts to advance net energy metering laws, C-PACE policies and programs, robust utility energy efficiency programming, and access to power purchase agreements. It also identifies top opportunities for engaging utilities, integrating clean energy into the economic development ecosystem, growing a skilled workforce, leveraging federal resources, and coordinating efforts with labor advocates. Click [here](#) to access the toolkit.

- **Rural wealth creation is an approach to community and economic development that is demand-driven, focusing on market opportunities that capitalize on a community's existing assets or underutilized resources.** Wealth creation is intentionally inclusive, building lasting livelihoods for those who may not have been at the table before, and it supports local ownership and control of assets. A new evaluation framework, developed by real-world practitioners, describes a series of indicators for measuring wealth creation impacts. To view the WealthWorks Evaluation Framework, click [here](#). For more information on WealthWorks, visit www.WealthWorks.org. Also see the [measurement guide](#) and [regional wealth creation case studies](#) previously written by the NADO Research Foundation.
- The recording is now available from the NADO Research Foundation's recent webinar with [Recast City](#), "Unleashing the Economic Power of Small-Scale Manufacturing." This **webinar explored 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.** Learn 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. Click [here](#) to view the recording.
- [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.
- "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 [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.

Events and Trainings

- 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.
- Join the [Environmental Finance Center Network](#) on **March 27 at 2 p.m. ET** for the **webinar “Ask the Expert: Developing the Water Workforce.”** This one-hour webinar will include a brief overview of several of the major components of workforce

planning and will focus the remaining time on a facilitated discussion of participant questions with two subject matter experts. Click [here](#) for more 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 partnership between a small college in Pennsylvania and local entrepreneurs has led to the discovery of a strain of hemp that can grow in mine waste, opening up new opportunities for economic development**, reports the *Citizens' Voice*. From the article: “Scientists with Mayfield-based AgriHemp Industries and Lackawanna College found at least one seed strain, shared from Penn State’s hemp research program, that grows well in culm, the mine waste piled in fields scattered throughout Northeast Pennsylvania...The scientists nurture seedlings with detoxified water from the 70-billion-gallon

underground mine void that runs from Carbondale to Jermyn... Following hemp's removal from the Controlled Substances Act, Harrisburg lifted the 100-acre cap on hemp fields, giving growers greater incentive to enter what analysts say could become a multi-billion-dollar CBD industry." 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.