

May 22, 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 RF 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

- Funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission **will support the Appalachia Aviation Maintenance Technician Training Project at Eastern Kentucky University**, reports *WKYT*. From the article: “EKU has partnered with several community colleges in the region to provide training for 86 FAA-certified aviation mechanical technicians. Commission federal co-chair Tim Thomas says jobs in the aerospace industry are in high demand, and the pay is worth pursuing....The training will allow the workers to accept jobs paying more than \$60,000 per year.” Click [here](#) to read the article.
- The *Kemmerer Gazette* notes that **lessons from a Carbon County, Utah plant shutdown can inform the way forward for the community if PacifiCorp moves ahead with early plant retirements as outlined in a recent updated coal study**. From the article: “In 2018, the Carbon County Commissioners restructured their Economic Development and Tourism departments and hired specialists to implement their strategic plan. Carbon County is also working with the state of Utah to secure economic stability and prepare for the future. Lincoln County [WY] has made similar moves, working with the governor’s office and local governments and economic development agencies to advocate for legislation and programs that would support the community in the event of an early shutdown.” Click [here](#) to read the article.
- *Montana Public Radio* reports on a **variety of carbon capture initiatives underway throughout the West, including through regenerative agriculture practices and new technologies**. From the article: “[Western Sustainability Exchange’s] Montana Grasslands Carbon Initiative pays farmers and ranchers to adopt conservation practices that pull carbon dioxide (CO2) out of the air and store it in the soil... With a ‘regenerative’ agriculture approach, ranchers use electric fencing or range riders to keep the herds bunched and moving quickly across a landscape. [This] prevents overgrazing and allows the plant roots to grow deeper into the soil...[A team led by Scott Quillinan at the University of Wyoming’s School of Energy Resources] received almost \$10 million last year from the U.S. Department of Energy to investigate whether CO2 could be stored safely and economically in the geological reservoirs at Dry Fork Station near Gillette. This spring they are gathering data on the geological features at the site and checking to make sure it isn’t close to any underground sources of drinking water. The project is intended to demonstrate over 50 million metric tons of carbon dioxide could be stored at this site.” Click [here](#) to read the article.
- The *Colorado Sun* interviewed **Nathan Fey, the new director of the Colorado Office of Outdoor Recreation Industry and a sixth-generation Coloradan, about his vision for the office and how outdoor recreation can support the state’s economy**. He responded to questions on economic diversification in rural Colorado and outdoor recreation opportunities: “There are places I have deep connections to that are very much in the traditional economies like extraction or ag and are looking to diversify and looking to welcome recreation and tourism. Those conversations have been happening for the 20-plus years I’ve been working in the public lands and water policy world. So now we can move forward with new tools and new opportunities... I look at communities like Nucla, Naturita, and places like Craig; their identity and their economy has been one

thing and they are on the cusp of transitioning into something new. They've got this incredible wealth of public lands and the Yampa River and the San Miguel River, BLM, and Forest Service right out their backdoor. There's an opportunity there to improve public access and safety and use of those places and create an amenity that draws visitors and more money and more investment." Click [here](#) to read the interview.

- **Wyoming's first solar trade organization has been established** as the Wyoming Solar Energy Association (WYSE) to support growth and collaboration in the industry, reports *County 17*. From the article: "The main objective of the WYSE is community engagement through educational outreach, advocacy, and business services. WYSE wants to make sure that revenue invested in local solar energy stays in Wyoming, so voting members must maintain an office in the state. Anyone working professionally in solar energy is eligible for membership." Click [here](#) to read the article.

Funding Opportunities and Educational Resources

- [Recreation Economy for Rural Communities](#) is a new planning assistance program from the [U.S. Forest Service](#), the [Northern Border Regional Commission](#), and [EPA](#) to **help communities develop strategies and an action plan to revitalize their Main Streets through outdoor recreation**. Outdoor activities are increasingly popular across the United States. Communities can take advantage of this trend to revitalize Main Streets. By conserving forests and other natural lands and making them available for outdoor recreation, small towns can boost air quality and water quality and focus development downtown. Communities are invited to apply for planning assistance; the application deadline is **May 31**. Click [here](#) to learn more and to apply.
- The [U.S. Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) Rural Development](#) is **accepting applications for grants to support economic development in rural communities**. The grants are being made available through USDA's [Rural Community Development Initiative \(RCDI\) Program](#) in order to strengthen the rural economy. The grants are not provided directly to businesses or individuals. Instead, qualified intermediary organizations receiving RCDI grants will provide technical assistance and training to help nonprofit organizations and communities develop their capacity to undertake housing, community facility, or economic development projects. USDA also encourages applications that will support efforts to combat substance use disorders, including opioid misuse, in high-risk rural communities by strengthening their capacity to address prevention, treatment, and/or recovery needs. Grant amounts will range from \$50,000 to \$250,000. Nonprofits, low-income rural communities, and federally-recognized tribes are eligible to apply. Electronic applications must be submitted to [grants.gov](#) by **June 5**.
- Through the [Native American CDFI Assistance Program \(NACA Program\)](#), the Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund provides (i) FA awards of up to \$1 million to Certified Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) serving Native American, Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian populations or Native American areas defined as Federally-

designated reservations, Hawaiian homelands, Alaska Native Villages and U.S. Census Bureau-designated Tribal Statistical Areas (collectively, "Native Communities") to build their financial capacity to lend to Eligible Markets and/or their Target Markets, and (ii) TA grants of up to \$150,000 to build Certified, Certifiable, and Emerging CDFIs' organizational capacity to serve Eligible Markets and/or their Target Markets and Sponsoring Entities ability to create Certified CDFIs that serve Native Communities. Click [here](#) to **read the NOFA and apply for Financial Assistance Awards or Technical Assistance Grants by June 6.**

- [HUD's Rural Capacity Building program](#) **enhances the capacity and ability of rural housing development organizations, Community Development Corporations (CDCs), Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs), local governments, and Indian tribes (eligible beneficiaries) to carry out affordable housing and community development activities in rural areas for the benefit of low- and moderate-income families and persons.** The Rural Capacity Building program achieves this by funding National Organizations with expertise in rural housing and rural community development who work directly to build the capacity of eligible beneficiaries. Applications are open for Rural Capacity Building for Community Development and Affordable Housing Grants (RCB) will be accepted **until June 11.** Click [here](#) to learn more in the NOFA.
- Grants from the [Farmers Market Promotion Program \(FMPP\)](#) **are available to increase domestic consumption of, and access to, locally and regionally produced agricultural products, and to develop new market opportunities for farm and ranch operations serving local markets** by developing, improving, expanding, and providing outreach, training, and technical assistance to, or assisting in the development, improvement, and expansion of, domestic farmers markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agritourism activities, and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities. The 2019 Grant application period is now open. Applications are due by **June 18.** Click [here](#) for more information and to apply.
- The [Department of Agriculture](#) will accept **applications for the Rural e-Connectivity Pilot Program (ReConnect Program)** beginning on **April 23, 2019.** Application deadlines will extend through **May 31** (deadline for grants) and through **July 12** (deadline for low-interest loans). \$600 million is available in total. Of this, \$200 million is available in grants, \$200 million is available in loan and grant combinations, and \$200 million is available for low-interest loans. This funding will be available nationwide to facilitate broadband deployment in rural areas that currently lack sufficient internet access. Telecommunications companies, rural electric cooperatives and utilities, internet service providers, and municipalities are all eligible to apply. Funds will be awarded to projects that have financially sustainable business models and that will bring high-speed broadband to rural homes, businesses, farms, ranches, and community facilities. Projects funded through this initiative must serve communities with fewer than 20,000 people that have no broadband service, or where existing service is slow. Further details are available [here](#).

- [The Delta Regional Authority \(DRA\)](#) has partnered with the [U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration](#) and the [Appalachian Regional Commission](#) to make approximately \$28.5 million available in [National Dislocated Worker Reserve: Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities \(WORC\) Grants](#) **to support workforce training and education in rural communities across the Delta and Appalachian regions.** To complement the federal partnership, DRA will host two technical assistance workshops, make an additional \$1.5 million in grants available in July 2019, and offer post-award technical assistance to grantees. The Delta Workforce Program will prioritize investing in communities and regions that have been negatively impacted by economic transition and recovered more slowly to help build their workforce pipelines and strengthen their economies. DRA will be hosting technical assistance workshops in Memphis, Tennessee on **June 4** and in Baton Rouge, Louisiana on **June 6**. The deadline for WORC Grants is **July 15** and the deadline for DRA workforce grants is **August 30**. For more information on these grants, workshops, and to apply please click [here](#).
- A [U.S. Department of Transportation \(DOT\)](#) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is available **for its competitive grant program known as the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD, formerly known as TIGER).** A total of \$900 million was appropriated for this program in FY 2019. The application is currently available online [here](#). The application deadline is **July 15**.
- The [Central Appalachian Network \(CAN\)](#) has released a **new report called “Creative Placemaking in Central Appalachia: Understanding the Role of Arts and Culture in Appalachia’s Economic Transition.”** CAN commissioned this scan of creative placemaking in Central Appalachia in order to understand what creative placemaking looks like on the ground, assess the state of the field regionally, offer ideas to strengthen and accelerate current momentum, and ultimately bring more attention and resources to advance the approach of creative placemaking in the region. Click [here](#) to learn more and download the report.
- The [National Association of Counties](#), in collaboration with the [Appalachian Regional Commission](#), **has published a new report “Opioids in America: The Role of Counties in Reversing a Regional Epidemic.”** It includes research findings as well as recommendations for local action on the part of Appalachian county officials that can help to decrease overdose and addiction rates in the region. Click [here](#) to learn more and download the report.

Events and Trainings

- **Event materials and additional resources are now available from the recent “Strengthening Economies in the West Coal-Reliant Communities Challenge,”** held in Denver on May 1-3 and organized by the National Association of Counties and the NADO Research Foundation with support from the EDA Denver Regional Office. This event brought together 11 teams from six states for a hands-on forum to create and work through action plans and implementation roadmaps for

economic diversification in their communities. Click [here](#) to access materials from the event, including presentations, roadmaps, news stories, and much more.

- The [Appalachian Regional Commission](#) is now accepting applications for the inaugural class of the [Appalachian Leadership Institute](#), **a new leadership and economic development training opportunity for community leaders who currently live and/or work in Appalachia**. The Appalachian Leadership Institute is an extensive nine-month program focusing on skill-building, seminars, best practice reviews, field visits, mentoring, and networking. The curriculum will be anchored by six multi-day seminars around the region, followed by a capstone graduation in Washington, DC. Click [here](#) to learn more and apply by **June 1**.
- The **National Regional Transportation Conference will be held from June 17-19 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. Visit the [conference website](#) to learn more and to register.
- **Save the date for "Appalachia Strong,"** an Appalachian Regional Commission Summit hosted by the State of North Carolina, scheduled for **September 4-6 in Asheville, NC**. More details will be available soon at www.arc.gov.

A Dose of Inspiration

- **Scientists at Rice University are exploring ways that coal can be used to create an artificial antioxidant to counter oxidative stress, which may help address brain injuries, strokes, and heart attacks**, reports *Medical News Today*. From the article: "Although scientists will have to do more research into antioxidant therapy, [Rice University chemist James Tour] believes his new work will be hugely beneficial in the future. "Replacing our earlier nanoparticles with coal-derived quantum dots makes it much simpler and less expensive to produce these potentially therapeutic materials," he says. "It opens the door to more readily accessible therapies."" Click [here](#) to read the article.

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