

June 26, 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

- **Kemmerer, WY is anticipating an early closure of the Naughton Power Plant and is exploring options to address how best to address this economic shock**, reports *Marketplace*. From the article: "In December, [Mayor Tony] Tomassi and other city leaders came together to discuss plans for a revitalized Kemmerer — plans that don't lean quite so heavily on coal. They hired a new city administrator, Brian Muir, to focus on that. "Careful strategic planning is really even more important for our community than it ever has been, because we've been in the coal for decades," Muir said. He helped put together an action plan with an aggressive timeline. Its three main points: diversify the economy, increase manufacturing, and boost quality housing. Muir is looking at tourism opportunities like attracting visitors interested in fossils. 50 million years ago, the area was full of tropical lakes." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- *WFPL* discusses how **coal communities in Ohio, including the city of Coshocton, are facing impending closures of coal-fired power plants and what diversification efforts are underway**. From the article: "Inside a former hotel now converted to office space, Coshocton Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Amy Stockdale sits with Tiffany Swigert, executive director of the Coshocton Port Authority, and Sherri Gibson, with Ohio Means Jobs Coshocton County... As AEP prepares to close its doors, they have devised a multi-pronged plan to help the community that borrows heavily from their experience dealing with past manufacturing losses. It includes working to identify sites for new manufacturers and cleaning up existing brownfield sites to boost the tax base. Swigert admits the efforts, driven in part by grant funding, are in the early stages. For workers facing unemployment, Ohio Means Jobs and Coshocton County Job and Family Services have stepped in to offer resume writing and interviewing classes at the Conesville plant." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- **Colstrip Units 1 and 2 in Montana will close by the end of the year and local and regional officials are looking into options moving forward to support local residents and workers**, reports *KTVQ*. From the article: ""Our real concern is the impact on the communities and particularly on the workers and their families," said Colstrip Mayor John Williams, the [Montana Coal Board's] chairman of 14 years..."Now the storm is here. We could see the clouds coming, but now it's here and we better be ready. It just got real," said Jim Atchison, head of the Southeast Montana Development Corporation in Colstrip. Atchison admits the turmoil in the coal industry has created an atmosphere of doubt and uncertainty for local residents, but he remains bullish on the town's future. "Homes are selling, but reduced in value, of course. The rental market is full. If you drive into Colstrip today, you will see six construction projects going on. It looks like a flurry of activity," he said." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- **A firm located in Pulaski, VA is making solid progress on innovative carbon filtration technology that could lead to a growing new industry in the former coalfields of Southwest VA**, reports the *Bristol Herald Courier*. From the article: "The filters are expected to capture coal fly ash, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, and carbon dioxide and suspend it in a solid sorbent material for safe transport — so it could be sold to companies that need those chemicals..."One thing I'm excited about is

these fabrication jobs will pay enough to entice people from Southwest Virginia back who are now on oil rigs and pipelines," [Steve Critchfield, the firm's president and CEO], said. "I'm hoping this will be a major step toward stopping the exodus of people from Southwest Virginia. If we can put these kinds of jobs in, we'll pull these people back in from Louisiana and Oklahoma plus keep people here, or people can learn it and move here.'" Click [here](#) to read the article.

- *State Impact Pennsylvania* reports on **efforts in the Moshannon State Forest in Elk County to plant new trees on reclaimed mine land in an effort to regrow the local ecosystem**. From the article: "A crew of professional tree-planters was brought in earlier in the week to get the bulk of the lot planted. And now it's up to the 20 or so volunteers to do the rest. They're planting 2,100 tree saplings on 2 acres of land. The samplings, donated by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, are a mix of native tree species: white pine, quaking aspen, red oak, and black locust." Click [here](#) to read the article.

Funding Opportunities and Educational Resources

- The [Department of Agriculture Rural Housing Preservation Grant](#) program is currently accepting applications. This program **provides grants to sponsoring organizations for the repair or rehabilitation of housing owned or occupied by low-income rural citizens**. USDA will award a total of \$15.8 million in funding. The deadline to apply is **July 8**. More information is available [here](#).
- The [Department of Agriculture](#) will accept **applications for the Rural e-Connectivity Pilot Program (ReConnect Program)** through **July 12** 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](#).
- 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 [Citizens Institute on Rural Design \(CIRD\)](#) will continue its tradition offering local design workshops that address **specific community challenges, and also create a new cohort learning program that will engage rural leaders from up to 20 additional communities.** All rural communities of 50,000 or less are eligible to apply for the CIRD local workshop and learning cohort opportunities. Nonprofits, tribal or municipal governments, regional planning organizations, and other community partners are encouraged to apply. Applications are being accepted through **July 22**. Click [here](#) for more information.
- 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. 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](#).
- The [Rural Responses to the Opioid Epidemic](#) grant program leverages the combined resources of the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the State Justice Institute (SJI), and other partners. The goal of this **funding opportunity is to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with opioid overdoses among individuals who come into contact with law enforcement or are involved in the criminal justice system in high-risk rural communities and regions.**

Under this solicitation, up to eight rural communities or regions will be selected for an award of up to \$750,000 each for a 24-month time period. Grant funds may be used to support activities including: strategic planning; strengthening epidemiologic surveillance and public health data infrastructure; increasing the use of evidence-based/culturally appropriate prescribing interventions; developing and implementing community-level opioid overdose prevention activities; and expanding peer recovery and support services. More information on this grant program can be found [here](#). The deadline to apply is **5:00 pm ET on July 26**.

- The [Local Initiatives Support Corporation \(LISC\)](#) has partnered with the [Council for Development Finance Agencies \(CDFA\)](#) and the [Ford Foundation](#) to develop a **playbook for community partners on Opportunity Zones**. This playbook is the first in a series in which LISC aims to lay out potential trajectories and best practices for the range of Opportunity Zones actors. The new playbook is available [here](#).

- The [Utah Department of Workforce Services](#) has **released a new online guide called “Energy and Natural Resources Communities” to serve as a one-stop resource** to assist energy and natural resource communities in building and maintaining resiliency. This guide contains maps, case studies, ideas, and other resources to assist communities with their economic diversification planning. Click [here](#) to access the guide.

Events and Trainings

- The [National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers](#) will be hosting a **webinar on treating substance use disorder in a community health center setting**. This webinar will educate healthcare and development professionals on the kind of substance abuse disorder services that can be offered via telehealth at community health centers. The webinar is scheduled for **June 26 from 3:00-4:00 pm ET**. More information and registration for this webinar can be found [here](#).
- The [Delta Regional Authority \(DRA\)](#) is currently **accepting applications for the Delta Leadership Institute (DLI) Executive Academy for the 2019-2020 cycle**. The DLI Executive Academy is a professional development opportunity that prepares and trains community leaders to help improve the economic competitiveness of the Delta region. The program is open to residents of Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee. The application deadline is **July 16**. More information on this program is available [here](#).
- With support from the US Economic Development Administration’s (EDA) Denver Regional Office, the [NADO Research Foundation](#) is coordinating ***Economic Brilliance and Resilience, an economic development conference*** for Economic Development Districts (EDDs), university centers, tribal planning grantees, Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) programs, Regional Innovation Strategies (RIS) grantees, and other stakeholders from the 10-state region. The conference will be held from **August 26-29** at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in **Denver, Colorado**. [Click here](#) to learn more and register online.
- **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

- *Voice of America* **highlights the Appalachian Beekeeping Collective that is providing income and a sense of purpose to displaced coal workers and low-income residents in West Virginia**. From the article: “After completing a free, five-week program, aspiring beekeepers are given bees, hives, and all the necessary supplies to get them started. Mentors work with them one-on-one throughout the beekeeping season and help them harvest the honey for cash when the season ends...The Appalachian Beekeeping Collective hopes that its program will help more West Virginians connect to their roots, and come to

appreciate the honeybees for the unique product they produce and the economic opportunities they provide.” 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.