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GROWING **STRONGER ECONOMIES** IN OUR NATION'S COAL COMMUNITIES

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 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

- The *Lake Powell Chronicle* reports on Apprenti, **a tech apprenticeship program that is retraining displaced workers from the Navajo Generating Station (NGS) in Arizona that will be closing in December.** From the article: "The goal is to train the apprentices to identify tech challenges in business, find solutions to those challenges, and implement solutions. All 10 NGS employees participating in the Apprenti program at [Coconino Community College] will remain [Salt River Project] employees while they undergo three months of intense classroom instruction, plus another year of on-the-job training at an SRP facility in the Valley. After successfully completing the apprenticeship requirements, each apprentice will become Journeyworker-level IT Business Analysts and start their new tech career with SRP." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- **Utah is pursuing an aggressive teleworking policy which among other benefits will create jobs in rural parts of the state, including in coal regions such as Emery and Carbon counties,** reports *KSL.com*. From the article: "Lt. Gov. Spencer Cox [recently announced] the implementation of a statewide teleworking program, following what state officials said was a successful pilot program...During the pilot program, which launched in September, 136 employees from four state agencies worked three days a week from home, according to a news release. The Department of Administrative Services, which oversaw the project, measured a 20% improvement in overall employee performance. The department also found participants were able to save 273 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions..."The program aims to increase building capacity and efficiency, boost employee recruitment, retention and satisfaction, provide job opportunities for rural Utah, and decrease emissions that contribute to air pollution, while also improving employee performance," the news release stated." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- *ReSource* reports on how various **organizations in Appalachia are performing housing energy audits and efficiency upgrades in coal communities** where rising energy prices are stretching tight budgets for residents. From the article: "In Letcher County, [Kentucky], 12.6 percent of homeowners are considered severely housing cost-burdened, up from 8.3 percent in 2010. A significant part of that is the cost of energy. Experts say that once utility costs exceed 6 percent of household income, families struggle to meet other basic needs. In some eastern Kentucky counties, the average resident is paying more than 19 percent of their annual income on energy costs. In some counties, the average low-to medium-income household spent more than 40 percent of their income on energy costs." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- **The uncertainty surrounding Wyoming's coal industry following the recent closure of two mines is affecting other local industries, including agriculture,** reports the *Tri-State Livestock News*. From the article: ""Everyone out at that coal mine is connected in some way to agriculture. It is all around us. In Campbell County we have a lot of ranchers, and most ranch families have someone working in town. Usually it's for the health insurance benefits. Most of those jobs provide excellent wages and benefits. Ag people often work in other industries to be sustainable and have health insurance. When

that family member loses that source of income they have to create another income stream, [says Michelle Pierce, Extension educator in Campbell County]." Click [here](#) to read the article.

- The *Roanoke Star* reports on how the **University of Virginia Appalachia Prosperity Project Fellows are exploring how a hemp industry in southwest Virginia can support economic development and diversify the regional economy** which has long relied on the coal and tobacco industries. From the article: "In April, Ryan Huish, a UVA-Wise biology professor and one of the fellowship recipients, held a workshop on growing industrial hemp at the Cove Ridge Conference Center at Natural Tunnel State Park in Scott County. Called "Virginia's Next Big Cash Crop: Industrial Hemp," it was an invitation to farmers to learn to grow the plants in Lee, Wise, and Scott counties." Click [here](#) to read the article.

Funding Opportunities and Educational Resources

- The [Rural Responses to the Opioid Epidemic](#) grant program leverages the combined resources of the US Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), the US 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 p.m. ET on July 26**.
- The Delta Regional Authority (DRA) and the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) have partnered with the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (DOL-ETA) to make approximately \$29.2 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 provide an additional \$1.5 million in grant funding, and will offer post-award technical assistance to grantees in the Delta region**. The Delta Workforce Program will prioritize investments in communities and regions that have been negatively impacted by economic transitions to help build their workforce pipelines and strengthen their economies. The deadline to apply for DRA workforce grants is **August 30**. For more information on the DRA partnership, click [here](#).

- The US Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has announced that **\$15 million in research funds are available to transit providers, state agencies, and federally recognized tribes** through the Integrated Mobility Innovation Demonstration program. Applications are due **August 6**. For more information, view the [funding announcement posted here](#).
- The [Columbia Center on Global Energy Policy](#) and [Brookings](#) have released a new report, "The Risk of Fiscal Collapse in Coal-reliant Communities" that **examines the implications of a carbon-constrained future on coal-dependent local governments in the United States**. It considers the outlook for US coal production over the next decade under such conditions and explores the risk this will pose for county finances. The paper also considers the responsibilities of jurisdictions to disclose these risks, particularly when they issue bonds, and the actions leaders can take to mitigate the risks. Click [here](#) to access the report.
- The [Appalachian Regional Commission \(ARC\)](#) has **released a new report summarizing the findings of six listening sessions focused on substance abuse related workforce issues**. At these sessions ARC leadership discussed these issues with representatives from local and state government, treatment and recovery service providers, workforce development entities, employers, law enforcement, and individuals currently in recovery. The report summarizes the outcome of these discussions, which identified five common themes that ARC should consider when addressing the economic issues stemming from substance abuse. Click [here](#) to access the report.
- The [Geos Institute](#) has recently launched the Climate Ready Communities program which includes **a free, step-by-step Practical Guide to Building Climate Resilience**. This Guide is based on 10 years of experience helping communities understand and adapt to changing climate conditions and the proven framework known as Whole Community Resilience developed by the Geos Institute during this time. This framework uses a cross-sector, multi-stakeholder approach that is adaptive over time and creates multiple benefits across the community. Climate Ready Communities aims to help local leaders develop climate resilience plans, while also strengthening local adaptive capacity to ensure that communities have the skills necessary to implement and update their plans over time. Click [here](#) to learn more.
- 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

