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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](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!

## Economic Diversification News

- The US Economic Development Administration recently **announced a \$1.46 million grant to Campbell County, Wyoming to support the creation of the Advanced Carbon Products Innovation Center in Gillette**, reports *Wyoming Public Media*. From the article: "The Advanced Carbon Products Innovation Center is part of an area goal to use its natural resources in new ways with the hope to sustain Campbell County's economy. "This is part of the overall process to diversify Gillette and Campbell County's economy, to better support our local people to provide more jobs and to ensure we have a great future for our children and our children's children," [Phil Christopherson, CEO of Energy Capital Economic Development] said. Christopherson estimated the center will create about 40 jobs and \$15 million in private investment." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- *Civil Eats* provides an **in-depth look at local food systems and value chains that have developed in Appalachian Ohio that are creating jobs, providing fresh foods, and helping to diversify the regional economy**. From the article: "Public and private organizations working in the region are increasingly eyeing the area's rich terrain, traditional foodways, and native plant products as an economic development lever for citizens living there...to ensure that the power structures controlling and profiting from the land's bounty are rooted in local ownership and economic networks." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- The US Bureau of Land Management has **approved the Sevier Playa Potash Project in rural Utah which has the potential to generate up to 370,000 tons of potash annually**, report the *Salt Lake Tribune*. From the article: "After 11 years of environmental analysis, the Sevier Playa Potash Project still needs to secure some state permits and water rights, but Crystal Peak Minerals is poised to begin construction as soon as next year on its 125,000-acre lease, according to Kevin Oliver, the BLM's West Desert district manager..."The possibility of 175 good-paying jobs is just a thrilling prospect," said Millard County Commission Chairman Dean Draper, who believes these gains will help offset anticipated job losses when the nearby Intermountain Power Plant switches from burning coal to natural gas in 2025." Click [here](#) to read the article.
- **Eight communities in the coalfields of Southwest Virginia achieved SolSmart designation this summer which will create new opportunities for solar investment and business development**, reports *Appalachian Voices*. From the article: "Each of the communities was awarded their SolSmart designation for efforts taken to reduce the time and expense required to install solar energy systems. These actions will have far reaching impacts, as solar energy allows residents and businesses to lower their electricity bills using a renewable power source, while at the same time driving new economic development and creating local jobs. "Many manufacturing companies are looking for communities and counties who are forward thinking, and having this designation just solidifies our commitment to our future," said Lou Wallace, member of the Russell County Board of Supervisors." Click [here](#) to read the article.

- **WYMT reports on the state of the hemp industry in Kentucky, which had \$58 million in gross product sales in 2018 and employs close to 500 people.** From the article: "'It's a new economy for Kentucky,'" said farmer and Chief Executive Officer of A-1 Implements Max Hammond. Hammond is advocating for farmers in Appalachia to invest in Kentucky's hemp industry. "This is a way we can bring hope to Appalachia," said Hammond. At a time where crops such as soybeans and tobacco are not selling for as much as they used to, hemp could be the key to the future of Kentucky farming." Click [here](#) to read the article.

## Funding Opportunities and Educational Resources

- The [US Environmental Protection Agency](#) **invites communities interested in revitalizing neighborhoods through development of local food systems to apply for [Local Foods, Local Places](#) technical assistance.** Local Foods, Local Places supports projects that create livable, walkable, economically vibrant main streets and mixed-use neighborhoods; boost economic opportunities for local farmers and main street businesses; and improve access to healthy, local food, especially among disadvantaged populations. Eligible applicants include local governments, Indian tribes, and nonprofit institutions and organizations proposing to work in a neighborhood, town, or city of any size anywhere in the United States. Communities with projects located in [federally designated Opportunity Zones](#) will receive special consideration. Highest consideration will be given to those communities who can identify how Local Foods, Local Places assistance will leverage the Opportunity Zone designation to support implementation of the resulting action plan. The deadline is **September 30**. Complete application instructions are available [here](#).
- The [US Economic Development Administration](#) has **made \$587 million available for eligible applicants in communities affected by disasters in 2018 and 2019.** Applicants should propose long-term, regionally-oriented, and collaborative strategies designed to generate economic growth and resilience. EDA will continue to accept applications on a rolling basis. For more information, click [here](#).
- The [US Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) Rural Development](#) is accepting applications for the [Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant \(REDLG\) Program](#). Through the **REDLG Program, USDA provides zero-interest loans and some grant funds to rural utilities, which they in turn pass through to local businesses for projects that will retain or create employment opportunities in rural communities.** The funding may be used to assist with business start-up and expansion costs; business incubators; feasibility studies; advanced telecommunications and computer networks for medical, educational, and job training services; and community facilities that spur economic development. Rural Development anticipates a maximum loan amount of \$2 million and a maximum grant amount of \$300,000. Awards are made on a competitive basis to utilities that will relend the

funds for local economic development efforts. Application deadlines and more information on this program is available [here](#).

- The [US Economic Development Administration](#) is encouraging its economic development partners to find ways to highlight Opportunity Zones in their regions in order to attract investment and encourage public-private partnerships. **EDA has created an EDA Opportunity Zones Webpage for economic development stakeholders** and others to use as a resource to help them foster job creation and attract private investment. Click [here](#) to access the EDA resource page.
- The [Columbia Center on Global Energy Policy](#) and [Brookings](#) have released a 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 [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](#).

## Events and Trainings

- Registration is open for the 2019 [EntreEd Forum](#), hosted by the [National Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education](#), that will take place in Lexington, Kentucky on **September 27-29**. The EntreEd Forum **provides attendees with a unique opportunity to learn about entrepreneurship education via hands-on workshops, engaging activities, and an interactive agenda.** Click [here](#) for more details and to register.
- [EPA’s Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization](#) is **hosting a free three-part webinar series called RE-Development Academy for Communities that will discuss the process for redeveloping a contaminated site through the eyes of a property developer.** Community members (including local governments, economic development, and environmental protection departments, community nonprofits, brownfield redevelopment agencies & other local stakeholders), technical assistance providers, and state and tribal partners are encouraged to participate. Click each of the links separately to register for the webinars: [September 13 Webinar: Redevelopment Process: The Intersection of Real Estate and Brownfields](#); [October 18 Webinar: Peering into the Crystal Ball: How the Market Decides Future Use!](#); [November 8 Webinar: Pulling Back the Curtain: How Developers Make Money!](#)

- Sponsored by the [Appalachian Regional Commission](#) and the [National Endowment for the Arts](#), the [Appalachian Gateway Communities Workshop](#) on **November 5-7 in Bristol, TN** will **provide teams with skills to capitalize on opportunities related to sustainable drivers for local economic development, cultural heritage and natural resource tourism, public arts promotion, and preservation and stewardship of community character**. In addition to enhancing a community's natural and historic assets, the role of the arts-particularly in revitalizing downtowns-will be explored by community teams to assist in developing strategies to safeguard community character and drive local economic development. The Appalachian Gateway Regional Workshop is open to teams of 4-7 members from communities that are entry points to Appalachia's most important natural assets-national and state parks and forests! Click [here](#) to learn more and apply by **September 16**.
- [Community Builders](#) is offering the [Building Better Places Training](#) on **November 6-8, 2019 in Grand Junction, CO**. Over two and a half days of intensive training, **community teams build leadership and understanding of planning, policy, development tools, community engagement and strategies for implementation**. Each team will leave the BBPT with a shared understanding of market conditions, opportunities for quality growth, key barriers impacting projects in their community, and how to overcome them. Community teams work with a dedicated facilitator to create a clear community action plan that identifies both short and long-term action items to accomplish the goals established at the training. Click [here](#) to learn more and apply by **September 16**.

## A Dose of Inspiration

- **The Stanford Graduate School of Business is partnering with local leaders and organizations in Williamson, WV to support local economic and community development efforts** that have led to more than \$8 million in public and private investments. Click [here](#) to watch a short video to learn more about the initiative.



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