



From Vacant to Vibrant Webinar Series: Strategies for Rural and Small-Town Renewal

Webinar #2
Innovative Rural Business Models
September 16, 2025





EDD CoP

Economic Development District
Community of Practice



More info at: www.nado.org/EDDCoP

This webinar is offered through the Economic Development District Community of Practice (EDD CoP), managed by the NADO Research Foundation to build the capacity of the national network of EDDs. To learn more, visit: www.nado.org/EDDCoP. The EDD CoP is made possible through an award from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce (ED22HDQ3070106). The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations in this webinar are those of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Economic Development Administration or the U.S. Department of Commerce.



The State of the EDDs & CEDS Content Guidelines Updates

Watch later Share

The State of the EDDs & CEDS Content Guidelines Updates

June 2023

Watch on YouTube

EDD&CEDS
Economic Development & Community Services

CEDS 101: What You Need to Know Right Now About the CEDS (March 2021)

The image is a YouTube video player thumbnail. At the top, a black bar contains the video title 'CEDS 101 What You Need to Know Right Now about the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy...' in white text, along with icons for search, share, and a user profile. Below this, a yellow banner displays the title 'CEDS 101: What You Need to Know Right Now about the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy' in bold black font. The main visual is a landscape photograph of a sunset over a body of water with tall grass in the foreground. A red play button icon is centered over the image. At the bottom, a yellow banner shows the date 'March 9, 2021' and the series name 'CEDS, Recovery, and Resilience Webinar Series'. The bottom left corner features the 'watch on YouTube' logo.

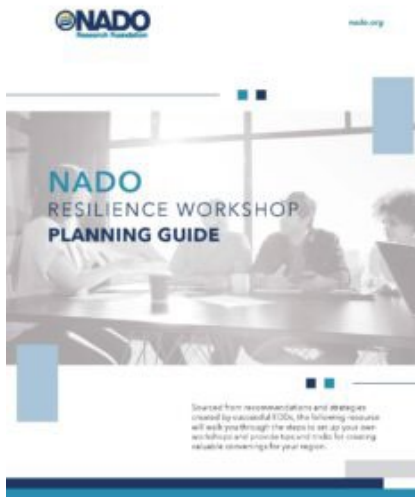
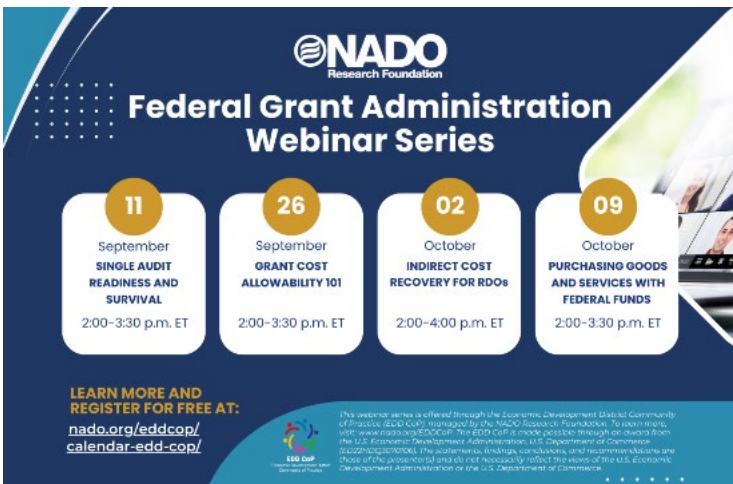
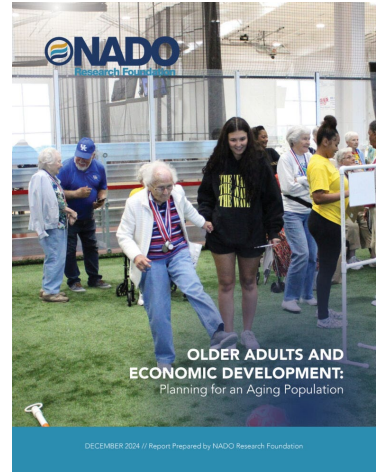
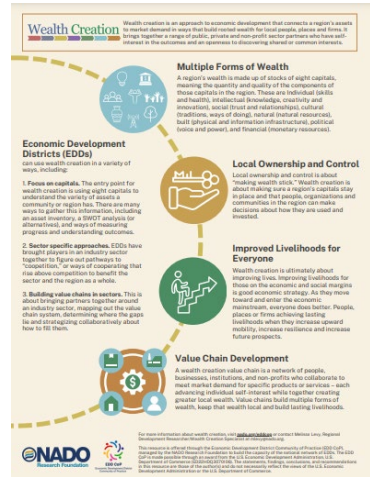
CEDS 101 What You Need to Know Right Now about the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy...

CEDS 101: What You Need to Know Right Now about the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

March 9, 2021

CEDS, Recovery, and Resilience Webinar Series

watch on YouTube



TIP SHEET



No one ever said doing regional economic development was easy. Whether navigating complex partnerships, aligning diverse community needs, or securing the right resources, EDD staff routinely face a wide range of challenges in their efforts to drive meaningful change. While there's no single roadmap for success, one of the best ways to chart a path forward is by learning from peers who've tackled similar hurdles.

This resource shares pieces of advice from Economic Development District staff whose 2025 NADO Impact Award-winning projects show how vision, planning, and collaboration can lead to meaningful results. These insights offer practical guidance for moving initiatives from concept to completion, reflecting the creativity, determination, and problem-solving needed to advance economic and community development. Whether you're starting a new effort or working to complete an existing one, these lessons provide real-world encouragement from those who've successfully navigated the path.

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September 2025



Visit: www.nado.org/EDDCoP

Peer Learning

The NADO Research Foundation manages four virtual Peer Learning Communities as part of the Economic Development District Community of Practice. These cohorts are designed to build and strengthen bonds among EDD staff across the national network Economic Development Districts. Each group has a different audience and objective – read on to learn more about the specifics of each and how you can get involved.



EDD CoP Collaborative Learning Group

The Collaborative Learning Group (CLG) is a 6-month virtual training and networking opportunity for new Economic Development District (EDD) staff who have been at their organization for 2 years or less.

[Learn More](#)

CEDS Peer Exchange Groups

These informal groups are designed to help staff troubleshoot challenges with their CEDS, share methods and 'best practices', and support each other during yearly and 5-year CEDS updates.

[Learn More](#)

NADO Mentor Program for Executive Directors

The NADO Mentor Program pairs experienced executive directors with new executive directors for one year to help new executive directors address the challenges facing their organizations and regions by connecting with experienced RDO leaders.

[Learn More](#)

New Executive Directors Resources

The New Executive Directors group was formed to share experiences, learn firsthand from experienced Directors, and have support when beginning this often-challenging role.

[Learn More](#)

Virtual EDD Chapter Meets Ups

Virtual EDD Chapter Meet Ups provide a space for Economic Development District staff to connect and network quarterly in small group discussions with peers in their EDA regions/NADO chapters.

[Learn More](#)

Learn more about our **virtual peer learning groups** at: <https://www.nado.org/copgroups/>

Join us in Salt Lake City, UT on October 14-17, 2025!

More info at: <https://www.nado.org/2025atc/>





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From Vacant to Vibrant Webinar Series: Strategies for Rural and Small-Town Renewal

Tuesday, September 9
"Filling Empty Buildings"
2:00 p.m. ET

Tuesday, September 16
"Innovative Rural Business Models"
2:00 p.m. ET

Thursday, September 18
"Self-Supporting Entrepreneurship"
2:00 p.m. ET



Stay in Touch!

Brett Schwartz

Associate Director
NADO Research Foundation

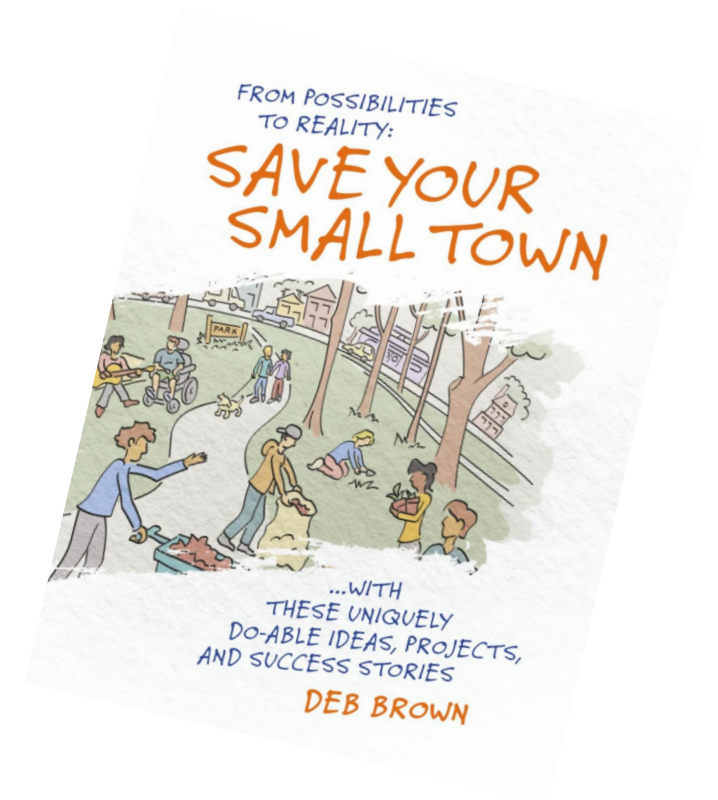
bschwartz@nado.org



Our Guide Today



Deb Brown
Cofounder, **SAVEYOUR**
.town





**Tiny, Temporary,
Together, Traveling, Tech
by Deb Brown**

Innovative Rural Business Models



Photos by Deb Brown

A Roadmap for Change

More accessible business formats

New ways of doing business

Smaller-scale market tests

Adapt to any size community

Pull down the barriers to entry



Photo by Nick

Hard Way

Find:

- building
- product
- funding
- suppliers
- staff

Photo by Becky McCray

Easier Way



That's the purpose of the innovative rural business models.

They put you in a much better position to succeed or to fail in a manageable way.

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Tiny



Tiny business inside a tiny business



Photo by Deb Brown



Photo via Rose Ellis Facebook Page

Tiny Spaces Can Change Lives

Tiny Sheds

Inexpensive
Incubators
Easy to modify
Portable
Lots of purposes



Photo by Austin Moore



Photo (CC) by Jeffrey Grandy

Tiny Sheds: Artist Shanties



Tiny Sheds: Kingman, KS The Binyard

Tiny Table



Tiny: Shed in a Parking Lot



Photo by Becky McCray

Tiny: Sheds Mean You Can Stop Waiting

Photo by Julia McCray

Tiny Market Village



Photo Forest County ED



Tiny: Enhance Economic Equity



Tiny:
Fill Your Pipeline
Wealth through entrepreneurship
seeded new businesses

Photos via WLOX

Things change Doesn't mean it failed



PASCAGOULA

**ANCHOR SQUARE TO BE REDEVELOPED
INTO RESIDENTIAL COTTAGES**

SAVE YOUR *.town*



Photo by Deb Brown

Temporary

Temporary: Pop-Ups

Test demand, marketing, sales strategies, pricing



Temporary: Artisan Markets in a town with no buildings



Photo via Zuni Pueblo Main Street, Facebook

Temporary: Art on the Walls

Cross pollination

Photo via [Somayeh Kashi Art on Facebook](#)

Temporary: Displays in Empty Buildings

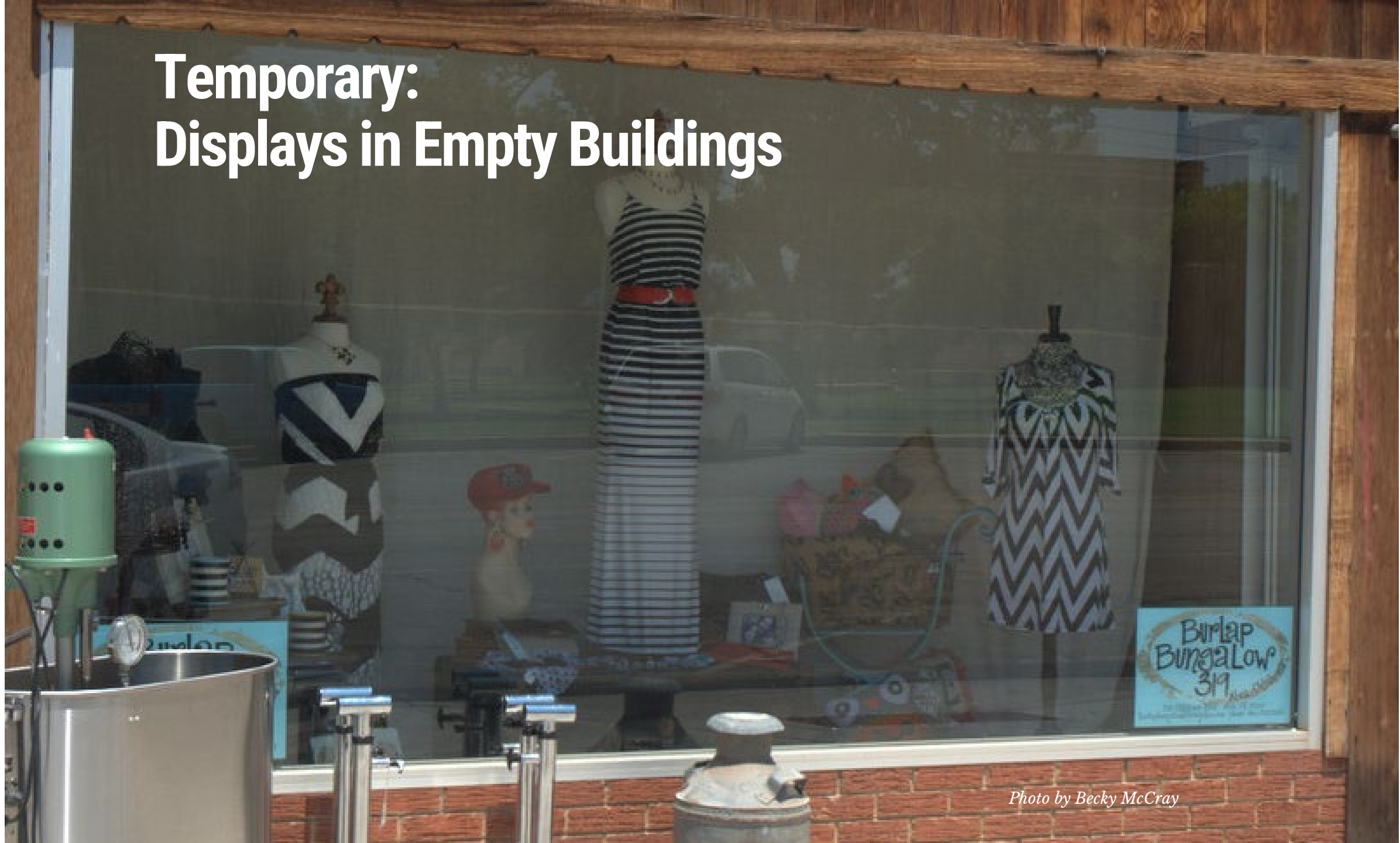


Photo by Becky McCray

Temporary: Simple Incubators

Photo by Deb Brown

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Together



Together in One Location

Business inside a business



Photo by Deb Brown

Together: Small Shop Spaces

Twisp, WA

Photo by Becky McCray



Together: Grocery Store Owners Test A Restaurant Idea

Photo by Deb Brown

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Traveling



Traveling: Recreation



Photo by Deb Brown



Traveling:
Services

Traveling: Old Way Skills



Mobile business Leo's Sharpening Service. Photo by Sue.

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Photo by Deb Brown

Tech Enabled

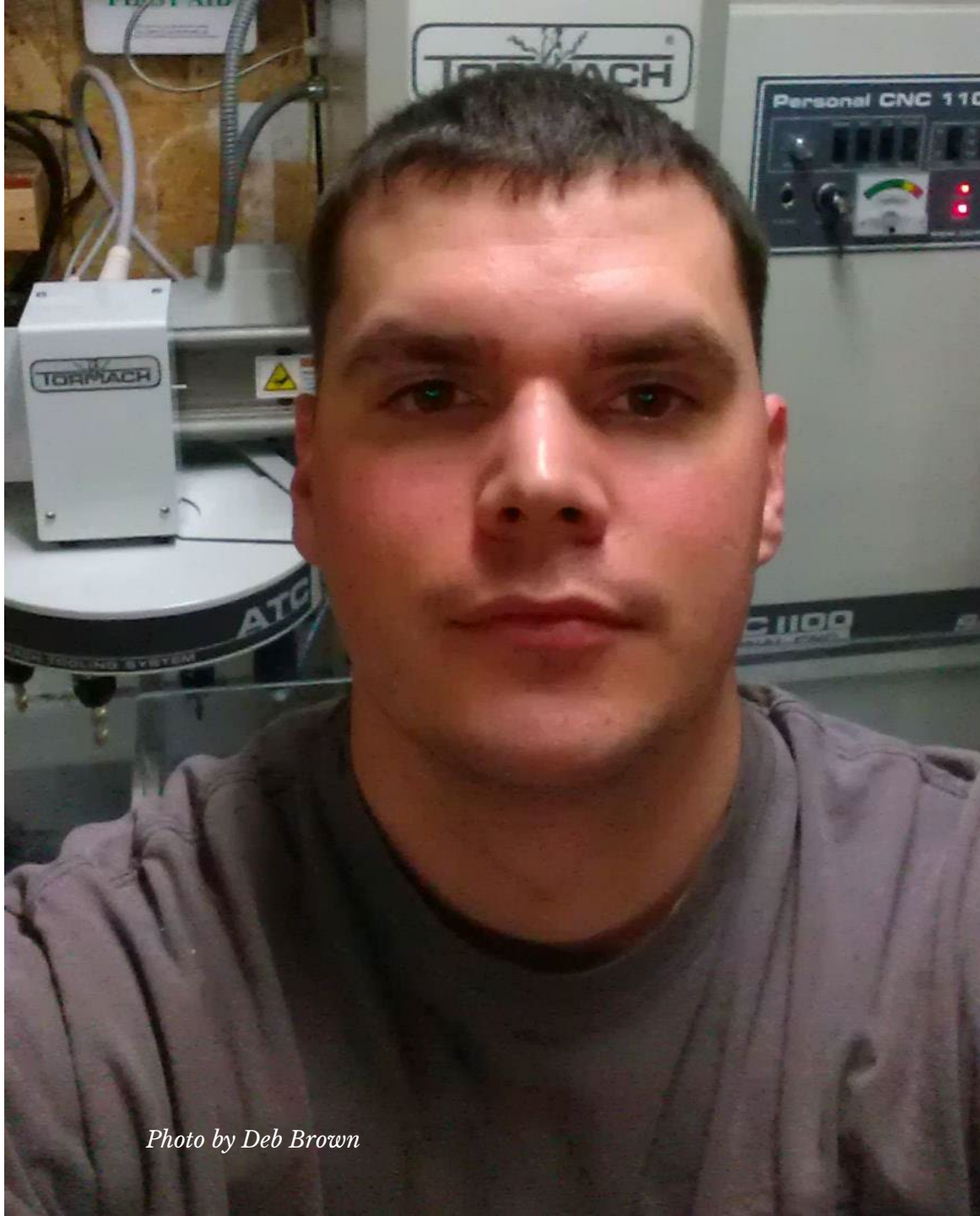


Photo by Deb Brown

Tech: Bottle Grenade

‘I had nothing to lose, really. I didn’t have any money in the Kickstarter project because it didn’t cost anything to get started. I called it the Bottle Grenade and set my goal for \$2,500, and on day one, I got an email every minute it seemed.

The project got to \$7000 after three days, so we went out to eat to celebrate.”

Photos via Deb Brown, Brad Martin

Tech: WTF



Photo by Brad Martin

***Web designers
writers
programmers
creative artists
marketers
consultants
virtual assistants***

Tech: Rural Businesses



Photo by Becky McCray

Kettle Crack: Tiny and Tech



Photo via Shawn's Facebook Page

Together



Photo via Shawn's Facebook Page

Traveling



Photo via Shawn's Facebook Page

Coffee time



Photo via Sharon's Facebook Page



Thank you!

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