Emerging Opportunities for Economic Diversification in Coal-Reliant Regions

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Presentation Agenda

➤ Quick Background

➤ Coal-Reliant Communities Innovation Challenge

➤ Lessons Learned

➤ Economic Diversification Strategies
  ➤ Southwest Virginia
  ➤ Southeast Kentucky
  ➤ Western Michigan
  ➤ Northwest New Mexico
NADO’s mission:

To strengthen local governments, communities, and economies through the regional strategies, partnerships, and solutions of the nation’s regional development organizations.

National membership organization for the network of over 520 regional development organizations (RDOs) throughout the U.S.

RDOs are also known as “Councils of Governments,” “Area Development Districts,” “Regional Planning Commissions,” “Economic Development Districts,” and other local names.
Economic and Social Impacts

- Loss of high-paying jobs
- Loss of indirect jobs
- Declining tax base
- Poverty and health outcomes
- Challenge to identity
- Sense of loss and grief

I can’t show ‘em what I did.
And they can’t say, “Well, I can do that.”

Flickr User Scott Clarke
Coal-Reliant Communities Innovation Challenge

September 2014 – March 2016

**GOAL**

To boost the innovative potential of places dependent on the coal industry that are seeking to grow and diversify their economies, create jobs and explore emerging opportunities.

Teams presented their strategies at conclusion of workshops.

Implementation Roadmaps

Cross-regional, cross-state sharing of lessons and strategies.

Peer Sharing

Presentations of Data + Case Studies

Examples of other sectors and regions in transition, economic modeling and workforce data.

Team Working Sessions

Small Group Discussions

Facilitated discussions on special topics based on team needs.

Teams were tasked with mapping out short and long term strategies.
Participants

Focused on Western issues: Colorado, Utah, Montana, Minnesota

Appalachian and Upper Midwest:
West Virginia, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Michigan, plus New Mexico

Appalachian issues:
Kentucky, West Virginia plus Colorado

23 teams total
18 EDDs
42 counties
200+ people
Key Themes

• Economies in Transition
• Changing Nature of Work
• Creating Great Communities
• Investing in Place
• Building Regional Resilience
Building Regional Resilience
Key Ingredients

- Leadership
- Partnerships
- Courage
- Respect
Economic Diversification Snapshots

Giles County, Virginia

Middlesboro, Kentucky
Economic Diversification Snapshots

Muskegon, Michigan

San Juan County, New Mexico
“We need to be prepared for the future, because we don’t know what the future holds for the coal industry.”

Rich Fink, former coal miner and retired Armstrong County, PA Commissioner
For Additional Information

NADO.org
DiversifyEconomies.org
NACo.org/InnovationChallenge
#ReadyToDiversify

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