



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **NACo launches effort to assist coal-reliant counties**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – The National Association of Counties (NACo) today announced an effort to assist counties and regions that have experienced economic challenges related to the coal industry.

With support from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, NACo and the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Research Foundation are hosting an “Innovation Challenge” to support job creation, business growth and long-term strategies that will benefit some of America’s hardest-hit communities.

“We are pleased to announce this groundbreaking effort specifically designed to help communities struggling with coal-related economic challenges,” said NACo Executive Director Matthew Chase. “This initiative will help foster economic conditions for growth and provide communities with tools to achieve their potential.”

The winning teams are led by:

- Big Sandy Area Development District, representing Floyd, Johnson, Martin, Magoffin and Pike Counties, Ky.
- Cumberland Valley Area Development District, representing Harlan County, Ky.
- FIVCO Area Development District, representing Boyd, Carter, Elliott, Greenup and Lawrence Counties, Ky.
- LENOWISCO Planning District Commission, representing Wise County, Va.
- Moffat County, Colo.
- Perry County, Ky., and
- Reconnecting McDowell, Inc., representing McDowell County, W.Va.

The teams participated in a competitive process earlier this year to secure spots at a three-day training workshop in Pikeville, Ky., in late April. They will receive intensive, hands-on training designed to boost their potential to strengthen and diversify their economies.

Moffat County, Colo. Commissioner Frank Moe said, “Our main goal for applying to attend an Innovation Challenge workshop was for our team to develop action-oriented steps, assign responsibilities and agree on a realistic timeline to better achieve our existing economic diversification goals. It is our belief that attending the workshop will also help us identify and focus in on our shared economic assets to help our county realize that we are all in this together.”

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The teams will benefit from individual assistance that will help them implement strategies related to economic diversification, asset-based development, workforce training, broadband, recreation and tourism, the healthcare sector and entrepreneurship.

Duane Miller, deputy director of the LENOWISCO Planning District Commission said, “We were excited to be chosen to attend an Innovation Challenge workshop because we believe it will help us gain the necessary knowledge needed to facilitate and support new solutions and actions that advance economic resilience within the county and surrounding region.”

Later this year, NACo and the NADO Research Foundation will hold two additional rounds of competition to invite counties and regions to attend future workshops in Colorado and West Virginia.

For the complete list of team members and more information, visit [www.naco.org/InnovationChallenge](http://www.naco.org/InnovationChallenge).

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*The [National Association of Counties](http://www.naco.org) (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo assists America’s 3,069 counties in pursuing excellence in public service to produce healthy, vibrant, safe and resilient counties. NACo promotes sound public policies, fosters county solutions and innovation, promotes intergovernmental and public-private collaboration and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money. More information at: [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org).*

