



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 28, 2015
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NACo announces teams selected to participate in effort to assist coal-reliant counties

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Association of Counties (NACo) today announced the next phase in 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. Under the first phase of this program, seven county-based teams in April participated in an educational workshop in Pikeville, Ky.

The second phase shifts geographic focus to Grand Junction, Colo. Counties and regions in western states applied to join this program by forming multi-sector teams and submitting applications to attend a workshop in Grand Junction and access additional support from NACo and NADO Research Foundation.

“We are pleased to announce the next phase of this groundbreaking effort specifically designed to help communities respond to 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 teams are led by:

- Moffat County, Colo.
- Region 10 Economic Assistance and Planning, Inc., representing Delta County and Montrose County, Colo.
- Rio Blanco County, Colo.
- Routt County, Colo.
- Sherburne County, Minn.
- Snowy Mountain Development Corporation, representing Musselshell County, Mont.
- Carbon County and Emery County, Utah, and
- Six County Association of Governments, representing Utah counties of Juab, Kane, Millard and Sevier.

The eight interdisciplinary teams participated in a competitive process to secure spots at a three-day training workshop in Grand Junction, Colo., scheduled September 16-18, 2015.

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Each team will benefit from individual assistance before and after the event that will help them implement strategies related to economic diversification, asset-based development, cluster development, workforce training, broadband, recreation and tourism and entrepreneurship.

Musselshell County Commissioner Nicole Borner said, “We feel like our team will benefit from the Grand Junction workshop because we hope to learn new approaches to diversify the economy and how to engage the community in these efforts, along with finding new ways local governments can help in improving the economy.”

Carbon County, Utah Economic Development Director Tami Ursenbach said, “We hope to bring the information obtained from the workshop back to the communities and local businesses in the region, and work with an extended committee to train and network with local leaders and businesses in moving projects forward. By doing so, we plan to educate the communities in the region thus giving hope and encouragement to replace the current doom and gloom resulting from the decline in the coal industry.”

Later this year, NACo and the NADO Research Foundation will host the third and final round of competition to invite counties and regions to attend an economic diversification training workshop in Charleston, W.Va.

For more information about the Innovation Challenge for Coal-Reliant Counties and Regions, visit www.naco.org/InnovationChallenge and for a full list of the selected teams chosen to attend the Grand Junction workshop, visit www.DiversifyEconomies.org/grand-junction-colo/.

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The [National Association of Counties](http://www.naco.org) (NACo) unites America’s 3,069 county governments. Founded in 1935, NACo brings county officials together to advocate with a collective voice on national policy, exchange ideas and build new leadership skills, pursue transformational county solutions, enrich the public’s understanding of county government, and exercise exemplary leadership in public service.