



APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION

POWER AWARDS, OCTOBER 2018

A complete list of all ARC POWER awards is available at www.arc.gov/power

ALABAMA

\$1,750,000 ARC grant to the Alabama Community College System in Montgomery, AL, for the Alabama S.T.R.O.N.G. (Skills Training to support Real Opportunities for New job Growth) project, which will target the coal-impacted communities in ten ARC counties in Alabama. The project seeks to increase awareness about the current and future job opportunities available in the advanced manufacturing sector, a growing part of the regional economy. It will provide students and workers with life skills, remedial education, and cutting-edge technical skills and certificate training to prepare them for either additional postsecondary education or direct placement into high-wage and high-demand careers available in Alabama's advanced manufacturing industry. Overall coordination will be provided through the state community college system, with individual course offerings delivered by Beville State, Jefferson State, Lawson State, and Shelton State Community Colleges. The project will expose thousands of residents to the benefits of working in advanced manufacturing, and it will serve close to 4,200 participants and their families directly with critical life and technical skills gap training, new job opportunities, and access to vital social and financial services necessary to succeed. At least 2,101 workers/trainees and 976 students will obtain new or enhanced positions, 1,132 jobs will be retained, seven new jobs will be created and six new programs implemented, and all 77 participating businesses will be improved by having access to a more skilled workforce.

KENTUCKY

\$1,305,200 ARC grant to the Appalachian Wildlife Foundation, Inc. in Corbin, KY, to install a wastewater treatment facility for the Appalachian Wildlife Center (the Center). The Center will be a major tourist attraction and a world-class education and research facility focused on wildlife conservation and re-use of reclaimed coal lands of Appalachia. Located on 19 miles of reclaimed mine land, the Center will feature the largest elk restoration and viewing effort in the United States and will boost tourism in a tri-state area. When fully operational, the Center expects to host over 835,000 annual paying attendees. The visitor center building will house classrooms, a museum of natural history and wildlife conservation, and a museum of regional history. An artisans' market, display gallery, and work area will highlight regional artists. Following the project's completion, 11 communities will be improved through revenues from tourism and 99 jobs will be created at the facility during the performance period. Additional funding for the Center is being provided through the Abandoned Mine Lands program of the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

\$1,000,000 ARC grant to the Center for Rural Development in Somerset, KY, to support the Center's Community Oriented Access to Learning (COAL) program. This training program will serve 14 counties in southern and eastern Kentucky that have been severely impacted by the downturn of coal production. The program will assist unemployed and under-employed individuals from these communities in obtaining training and education that will support them in finding employment. Additionally, the program will benefit employers within the region by providing a more skilled workforce to meet growing workforce demands. The grant will support training and education in two growing sectors: Allied Health and Information Technology. The COAL program will also offer much-needed soft skills training. The COAL program expects that 50 Allied Health workers/trainees will obtain employment in a field related to their training, 110 Information Technology students will obtain employment and/or move into a higher-level position based on the training they receive through this program, and 26 broadband technology students will obtain employment and/or continue their education.

\$600,000 ARC grant to Hazard Community and Technical College (HCTC) in Hazard, KY, to expand the college's welding technology program. HCTC's welding technology program is operating at capacity and the demand generated by regional employers exceeds the resources available to the college. The grant will fund renovations, equipment, and personnel, serving at least 12 more students per cohort in each short-term training. The training is developed in consultation with area employers. At the end of the grant period, HCTC expects 70 workers/trainees will obtain a job in the field for which they were specifically trained and 60 students will complete the credit-bearing training program. The expansion of the welding program builds on a prior POWER grant to HCTC to expand its course offerings in four other career clusters.

\$80,000 ARC grant to Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College in Cumberland, KY, for an assessment of investment opportunities in five Southeastern Kentucky counties (Bell, Harlan, Knott, Letcher, Perry), focusing on identifying redevelopment projects that also include potential entrepreneurship components. The assessment will include an executive summary that presents an overview of creative place-making in the five-county region, an economic and financial snapshot for each county, and investment case studies from within Southeastern Kentucky as well as from outside the region. The findings will yield a set of recommended investments and opportunities. Additionally, a communications strategy will be released to help market these opportunities to local communities, developers, and philanthropies. The assessment will tie in the work of six POWER-funded projects in the area.

MISSISSIPPI

\$730,559 ARC grant to the Golden Triangle Planning and Development District in Starkville, MS, to support a project that will diversify the economy of four coal-impacted Mississippi counties (Choctaw, Kemper, Webster, Winston) by building a competitive manufacturing workforce. The project's first goal is to implement a middle-skill manufacturing training program based on the *Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model* to build up a skilled workforce in the four counties. The second goal is to strengthen existing *Pathway Model* programs in the region, especially work experience opportunities.

Developed by the State of Mississippi, the *Pathway Model* consists of intensive career development, necessary skills assessment, and basic skills development with career enrichment activities geared toward in-demand, middle-skilled occupations. Training will be provided by three area community colleges. At least six of the eight participating companies will be improved by hiring students and trainees. It is anticipated that 108 of the students who enter a training program will complete and obtain employment. All 165 incumbent workers will benefit from having higher level skills, and 31 of the unemployed adults will obtain employment.

NORTH CAROLINA

\$1,250,000 ARC grant to the Southwestern NC Planning and Economic Development Commission in Sylva, NC, for physical improvements to the Western North Carolina Farmers Market (WNCFM). This investment will bring the market to appropriate standards and capacity to expand the region's food and agricultural economy. The project will strengthen the economy in an area that has seen job losses associated with the closure of a nearby coal-fired power plant and the conversion of another coal-power generation facility to natural gas. The infrastructure improvements will provide immediate benefits to 64 market-dependent businesses, will attract new clients and consumers to the market, and will provide space to incubate value-added businesses. Construction of a Value-Added Food Business Support Center, managed by Blue Ridge Food Ventures, will expand operations at the WNCFM to include entrepreneurs engaged in production and sale of foods, cosmetics, and natural products in an FDA-certified facility. Performance outcomes from this investment are expected to include 64 businesses improved, 36 businesses created, 50 new jobs created, 120 existing jobs retained, 150 students improved, 25 worker trainees improved, and \$700,000 in leveraged private investment. Additional funding is being provided by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture.

\$940,000 ARC grant to Mountain BizWorks in Asheville, NC, for a collaborative regional approach to expanding Western North Carolina's (WNC) promising outdoor gear manufacturing industry. With a focus on fostering entrepreneurship in this sector, the project will leverage assets within the region's coal-impacted communities to create and grow new businesses. These assets include a skilled workforce, the region's manufacturing heritage, and popular natural and cultural resources. The project will also support timely economic diversification in WNC's communities that have lost jobs and economic activity related to coal industry contractions, including the conversion of coal-fired power generating facilities, the closure of a key coal rail yard, and the loss of mining-related customers for local manufacturers. Strategies for boosting the outdoor gear sector include workforce development, entrepreneurship and access to capital, supply chain optimization, and engagement of local economic development practitioners. To advance the sector, Western Carolina University will develop new degree and certificate programs and the area's community colleges will promote outdoor industry career pathways. Outcomes for this project are expected to include 100 businesses improved, 50 students improved, 45 workers/trainees improved through enhanced skills, \$4 million in leveraged private investment, 35 new businesses created, 150 new jobs created, 65 jobs obtained, and \$6 million in new revenue by participating firms.

\$100,000 ARC grant to Mayland Community College in Spruce Pine, NC, on behalf of the Community Colleges of Appalachia (CCA) to develop two strategic plans that address both opioid issues and entrepreneurial training in the coal-impacted communities served by the community colleges. The funding will allow two CCA colleges from each of the thirteen ARC states to participate in the plans' formulation. As plans are developed, they will be made available to all community colleges in the Appalachian region, fostering partnerships that address ARC's goals of developing and maintaining a healthy workforce and creating environments that support the growth of entrepreneurial enterprises. This project will help identify sources of funding that will help with the implementation of the plans.

\$99,000 ARC grant to the Piedmont Triad Regional Council in Kernersville, NC, for a strategic plan to address the current and future workforce needs of Forsyth and Surry counties—two counties that are experiencing challenges associated with the decline of the coal supply chain as local manufacturers lose customers in the coal industry. This plan will include a state-of-the-art workforce development and education center called the *Dream. Career. Academy*. The center's purpose will be to train workers to fit the needs of the local and regional economies and close the growing talent alignment and skills gap.

OHIO

\$750,000 ARC grant to Ohio University in Athens, OH, for the Social Enterprise Ecosystem (SEE) program to foster social enterprise activities in coal-impacted communities in Ohio and West Virginia. The grant will support a two-year continuation and expansion of the one-year SEE pilot project previously funded by a POWER grant. Social enterprises use for-profit business strategies to achieve specific social benefits. The project focuses on several key areas, including entrepreneurial and business development, creating a ready workforce, building critical infrastructure (such as broadband), leveraging cultural assets to stimulate economic activity, building capacity for social enterprises, and convening and facilitating impact investors' investments in the region. Through the grant, new or strengthened social enterprises will serve at least 32 communities. Key partners for the work include the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio, the Parkersburg (WV) Area Community Foundation, and Rural Action. The project expects to improve the performance of at least 42 social enterprise businesses and help launch 17 new ones. In addition, the SEE team projects that 38 new jobs will be created, and the grant will yield at least \$6 million in leveraged private investment.

\$538,200 ARC grant to the Lawrence County Economic Development Corporation in South Point, OH, to foster the creation of a dynamic angel investment group serving the tri-state region of Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia. The project will build the technical capabilities of the Tri-State Angel Investing Group (TSAIG) so that increased amounts of private funds can be raised and invested in potential high-growth companies across 19 counties in Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia. The lack of angel capital is an impediment to entrepreneurial growth and job creation in the tri-state region. The expected outcomes for this project include 30 businesses improved, five new businesses created, 40 new jobs, 19 communities improved, and \$1 million in private investment that will be leveraged through ten new investors.

\$78,624 ARC grant to Buckeye Hills Regional Council in Marietta, OH, for a feasibility study examining broadband deployment opportunities along Route 33 in Ohio between Groveport and Belpre. Half of Appalachian Ohio's residents and business are without broadband service that meets FCC standards. This study will analyze service gaps, gauge demand in underserved communities, inventory existing assets, and develop strategies for deployment. The ultimate goal is to attract new jobs and investments in areas affected by the loss of coal-related jobs and establish a new "high tech corridor."

\$30,000 ARC grant to Growth Partnership for Ashtabula in Jefferson, OH, to develop a strategic plan for Ashtabula County's rail and port transportation infrastructure. Due to the downturn of the coal economy, service has been cut at the County's ports and along its rail lines. The plan will inventory existing transportation infrastructure assets and review market needs in order to identify opportunities for greater usage of current assets by local businesses.

PENNSYLVANIA

\$1,227,447 ARC grant to the Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission in Altoona, PA, to expand the Alleghenies Entrepreneurial Ecosystem ("Startup Alleghenies"). Startup Alleghenies seeks to recognize, encourage, and guide entrepreneurs to create new businesses or expand existing businesses, ultimately generating new jobs and investments in the Alleghenies Region. The project will identify innovative, entrepreneurial individuals and connect them with coaches/mentors who will link them with resources and training to facilitate their success. Startup Alleghenies first received a POWER grant in 2017, with the work focused on Blair, Cambria, and Somerset Counties. The new grant will help the Alleghenies Entrepreneurial Ecosystem increase the number of new business starts by expanding the geography served to include Bedford, Fulton, and Huntingdon Counties and by enriching the offerings provided through the four existing pillars of the ecosystem including: providing coaching, creating places for entrepreneurs, establishing a network of resources, and producing events, gatherings, and trainings. The expansion is expected to create 30 new businesses, improve 20 existing businesses, leverage \$2 million in private investment, and create 150 new jobs. Additional funding for the work of Startup Alleghenies is provided by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies.

\$1,035,000 ARC grant to Innovation Works, Inc. in Pittsburgh, PA, for the Western Pennsylvania Small Business Services for Coal-Impacted Communities (SBS) program. The project focuses on the revitalization of western Pennsylvania's coal-impacted communities through innovation and entrepreneurship by providing opportunities for those negatively impacted by contractions in the coal economy, including displaced individuals looking for new jobs or opportunities to start their own businesses, main-street businesses in need of business-support services, and new and existing manufacturing and technology businesses. The SBS is a joint initiative of Innovation Works/Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Southwestern Pennsylvania, Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Central and Northern Pennsylvania, and the University of Pittsburgh's Institute of Entrepreneurial Excellence (IEE). Together, they will provide opportunities through co-working spaces, accelerators, and incubators to

service business owners, independent contractors, and entrepreneurs in communities where there are limited resources. Targeting 24 coal-impacted counties in western Pennsylvania, the project is expected to help create 32 new businesses and 156 new jobs, retain 260 existing jobs, and leverage \$20 million in private investment.

\$670,000 ARC grant to Catalyst Connection in Pittsburgh, PA, for PA MAKES (Pennsylvania Manufacturing Assistance for Keystone Entrepreneurial Success). This initiative will be implemented in over 48 coal-impacted counties across Pennsylvania and use mini grants that will support small and medium manufacturing enterprises (SME's) in an "economic gardening approach" that provides targeted and direct assistance to companies. Catalyst Connection is the region's Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), providing technical assistance to help businesses increase their competitiveness. PA MAKES' efforts to diversify and grow SMEs will include building SMEs' capacity, improving efficiencies and demand locally, stimulating job creation, and driving economic impact. To help SMEs become more competitive, PA MAKES will help these enterprises make strategic business investments that will foster market and product diversification and growth. Outcomes of the initiative are expected to include 42 businesses improved, 120 new jobs created, 1,200 jobs retained, and \$15 million in leveraged private investment.

\$587,950 ARC grant to the Community College of Beaver County in Beaver, PA, for the Tristate Energy and Advanced Manufacturing (TEAM) Consortium in order to launch a three-part, regional (Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia) workforce development initiative. The initiative's goal is to increase enrollment and graduation from education and training programs to provide a supply of skilled workers for energy and advanced manufacturing (E&AM) industries that are critical to the resurgence of the tristate region. The initiative's first step is to align relevant curricula among higher education institutions in the three states to facilitate the creation of seamless pathways to jobs. The second is to provide the necessary online access to information and referrals to programs within E&AM, and the third builds on the success of outreach and engagement practices that raise awareness of, change perceptions about, and increase interest in pursuing occupations in targeted STEM manufacturing sectors. Within three years of completion of this project all 120 participating businesses will be improved by upskilling their current workforce and/or hiring new workers, 600 jobs will be created, 402 students will obtain employment, 752 workers will have higher skills, and eight new programs will be implemented. The grant builds on work funded by the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation and Chevron and takes advantage of an agreement for developing the region's shale resources signed in 2015 (and subsequently renewed) by the Governors of the three participating states.

\$72,000 ARC grant to the Pennsylvania Environmental Council in Pittsburgh, PA, for a feasibility study assessing the uncompleted sections of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail and the PA Wilds Loop. These two trails are a part of the Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition, which utilizes existing natural and cultural assets in the region to diversify the local economies. Work will include right-of-way acquisition assessments, community outreach, segment prioritizations, and identifying funding sources that will help cover the costs of completing the final 210 miles in the trail system. The local communities have already

seen the benefits of a burgeoning tourism sector from recently completed trail sections. A previous POWER grant is supporting entrepreneurship activities in the Pennsylvania Wilds.

\$40,000 ARC grant to SEDA-Council of Governments in Lewisburg, PA, for a feasibility study of broadband access in four central Pennsylvania counties (Clinton, Lycoming, Northumberland, Union). The study will assess current broadband needs in the four-county region and review existing infrastructure assets, both public and private. With this data, three communities in each county found to likely benefit the most from increased access to broadband will be selected for further implementation projects. The study will also help create a model Request For Proposals (RFP) that can be used for future implementation projects.

TENNESSEE

\$1,500,000 ARC grant to the Volunteer Energy Cooperative in Decatur, TN, for the Internet of Things (IoT) Innovation Ecosystem Project. This project involves the buildout of an Internet of Things ecosystem with three components: an IoT technology platform, innovation partners, and an entrepreneurial ecosystem. Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) is developing the IoT technology platform by deploying fiber optic broadband and smart grid technology to improve real time management of power supply and demand. These investments will drive the prototyping of technology solutions by innovation partners like Tennessee Tech University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Lincoln Laboratory. Viable solutions can be further developed and commercialized by entrepreneurial clients of the Biz Foundry and other entrepreneur centers in the Launch Tennessee network, itself a prior POWER grantee. An IoT innovation ecosystem holds the promise of utilizing local utility infrastructure to expand rural broadband access and to generate new businesses and jobs from an emerging "data economy." Anticipated outcomes of deployment include \$4.4 million of additional grid improvements by VEC, 416 households improved by subscribing to fiber broadband service, 22 businesses improved by subscribing to fiber broadband service, 250 households improved by subscribing to load management service, and 13 businesses improved by subscribing to load management service.

\$68,000 ARC grant to Appalachian Community Federal Credit Union in Kingsport, TN, to underwrite a study for developing an affordable, flexible loan program called *Funding the Future*. The program will focus on providing accessible financing to residents in a 17-county area across Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia for in-demand certificate training programs. Despite being hit by the decline of the coal industry, there exists a demand for good-paying jobs in the service area including welders, line technicians, and commercial truck drivers. Current loan programs at the state and federal level are limited in what they can offer for certificate-granting programs and are restrictive in what can be paid for using loan funds. *Funding the Future* looks to fill the existing funding gap by providing flexible loans for in-demand programs that can also be used to cover living expenses and tools of the trade, as well as tuition and books.

VIRGINIA

\$2,500,000 ARC grant to Virginia Community Capital in Christiansburg, VA, for *Impact Appalachia: A Market-Making Fund for Central Appalachia*. The project will fill critical capital gaps to strengthen Central Appalachia's economy and accelerate market development for a six-state region (Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia). *Impact Appalachia* will support business development and advance emerging sectors in the region by acting as an entrepreneurial ecosystem coordinator to increase the region's readiness and capacity to attract and absorb capital. It will provide grant-like funds to fill critical gaps in the investment pipeline and will serve as an investment vehicle providing capital to investment-ready businesses. It will also launch an impact investment fund that will raise and deploy affordable capital to expand essential infrastructure and invest in job-creating businesses that build local wealth and increase the number of quality jobs. The project is anticipated to improve 15 communities, leverage \$111 million of private capital, and create or retain 649 jobs.

\$917,315 ARC grant to the LENOWISCO Planning District Commission in Duffield, VA, to conduct *Project Intersection*, a new regional 200-acre industrial site in the coalfields of southwestern Virginia. LENOWISCO will partner with the Norton Industrial Development Authority and Lonesome Pine Regional Industrial Facilities Authority in developing the site on abandoned mine land. The ARC grant will be paired with a portion of an already awarded grant from the Abandon Mine Lands (AML) Pilot program of the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement at the U.S. Department of the Interior. Project activities will yield a highly visible, highly desirable, regional industrial and business site. *Project Intersection* is situated at the junction of U.S. Highways 23 and 58A, with the highest cumulative non-Interstate traffic volume in far southwestern Virginia. No comparable combination of available land and transportation infrastructure exists in that part of the state. The development of *Project Intersection* aids the effort to foster diversification and rejuvenation of the regional economy, luring private investment and new employment opportunities. The initial phase of development will create 75 jobs and an initial private capital investment of \$10 million as a result of companies locating at the site.

WEST VIRGINIA

\$2,034,667 ARC grant to Coalfield Development Corporation in Wayne, WV, to support its Social Enterprise and Economic Diversification-Leveraging Investment for Transformation (SEED-LIFT) project. The project's primary objective is to remove barriers to participating in the workforce. SEED-LIFT plans to improve the education and skill-sets of residents to ensure workforce readiness within a four-county region in West Virginia (Lincoln, McDowell, Mingo, Wayne). It will strengthen cultural assets (especially coal community downtowns) by investing in community-based real estate development through social-entrepreneur oriented revitalization concepts; and will continue to grow Coalfield Development Corporation's network of employers leading to reemployment training and job placement services. Lastly, the project will recapitalize existing social enterprises to expand job creation and business development. At the project's completion, there will be seven communities improved, 60 jobs created, three new businesses created, revenues increased by 35 percent, 50,000 square feet of redeveloped downtown space, and \$7 million in leveraged private investment. The project builds on the demonstrated success of

Coalfield's previous POWER grant and its innovative 33-6-3 on-the-job training/education/life skills workforce development model. Additional funding is being provided by the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation.

\$1,800,000 ARC grant to the West Virginia Forest Products Cooperative, Inc. (WVFPC) in Princeton, WV, to foster a more competitive forest products-based industry in an interstate region centered at Princeton, West Virginia. WVFPC plans to develop a skilled, competitive workforce capable of utilizing advanced manufacturing equipment and processes for the manufacture of secondary forest products. Training will be provided through a partnership with the Robert C. Byrd Center for Advanced Manufacturing at Marshall University. The Cooperative will also encourage business development and entrepreneurial activities from the pool of trained members. These two initiatives will lead to the formation of a forest products hub that will allow businesses to be independent designers and manufacturers but at the same time capture the efficiencies of scale that are usually only afforded to larger companies. The resulting numbers at the project's completion are expected to include 50 new businesses created, 250 new jobs created, ten existing jobs retained, and \$4 million in leveraged private investment, 50 businesses improved, 1,000 workers improved, and 40 students improved. The U.S. Forest Service will provide manufacturing space for WVFPC.

\$1,499,175 ARC grant to the Marshall University Research Corporation in Huntington, WV, for the Creating Opportunities for Recovery Employment (CORE) Program. The program will develop a regional system to provide treatment and recovery services, job training, and placement assistance for displaced workers suffering from the effects of the downturn in coal production and the opioid epidemic in rural, southern West Virginia. Components of this large-scale project include three hubs offering peer recovery coaches and job training and placement, six Drug Free Moms and Babies sites, three new programs offering medication assisted treatment by health care providers, and a network of private sector partnerships. Other innovative aspects of the CORE Program feature development of social enterprises to create additional sustainable employment opportunities to those in recovery and leveraging sustainable investment in health care delivery services by developing a "pay for success" or other innovative financing model. Key partners in the project include the Region 1 Workforce Development Board, the West Virginia Perinatal Partnership, and Coalfield Development Corporation. As a result of the CORE Program, of 1,500 participating individuals, 850 will gain improvements in the form of documented placement in a new job or the retention of an existing job. Of 250 participating businesses, 83 will benefit, as measured by the successful hiring of at least one CORE client. Sixteen jobs will be created for professionals working in the partner agencies. Approximately three new business social enterprises will be formed, providing employment opportunity and social returns for their communities. Additional funding is being provided by the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation.

\$1,370,000 ARC grant to the Natural Capital Investment Fund (NCIF) in Shepherdstown, WV, for the Downtown Appalachia Redevelopment Initiative (REDI). The project seeks to create healthy downtown commercial districts with robust, resilient local economies in coal-impacted West Virginia towns by catalyzing downtown revitalization. Through an integrated, comprehensive set of strategies, REDI, in

collaboration with the Northern West Virginia Brownfields Assistance Center, will identify, grow, and support property owners, private developers, and community development groups who will invest in and manage their properties to benefit their communities, bringing about the return of healthy real estate markets and local economies, as well as creating economic opportunities. REDI will drive sustainable economic development downtown by building local capacity among private and public sector participants, enabling catalytic commercial real estate redevelopment projects through targeted technical assistance, and providing financial packaging, structuring, and equity-like financing for projects. In addition to providing technical assistance, NCIF will launch a Downtown Appalachia Redevelopment Loan Fund as a financial resource for eligible property owners. Expected initiative outcomes include: five communities served through the revitalization of significant buildings, five businesses improved through increased property values and/or revenues, \$8 million in leveraged private investment (LPI), 80 jobs retained, and 80 jobs created. Additional financial support for REDI is being provided by the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation.

\$749,001 ARC grant to BridgeValley Community and Technical College in South Charleston, WV, to develop a Construction, teleCommunications, and Energy (CCE) Workforce Training Center based in Montgomery, West Virginia. This center will provide workforce training in content areas identified by industry partners that provide the job skills needed to obtain an entry-level position in the industry. The center will also have HVAC and energy management coursework that will prepare students with the skills needed to obtain employment in the HVAC industry and electrical metering departments of utility companies. After completing eight weeks of training, students will be eligible for on-the-job training experiences at partnering companies. Expected project outcomes include ten businesses improved through access to skilled workforce and 202 workers/trainees improved through employment.

\$100,000 ARC grant to West Virginia Geological & Economic Survey in Charleston, WV, for the State of West Virginia Broadband Development Hub. The grant will fund an online hub hosting information concerning prospective broadband deployment in West Virginia. Initially ten counties and their municipalities will have access to a broadband development hub that will host content related to broadband deployment, including information on access, public rights-of-way, a database of currently available assets, and draft contracts for dealing with service providers. Multiple agencies throughout the state will contribute to the platform. The data collected throughout this process will then be used to create a *Guide to Broadband Development in West Virginia* and a supplemental legal toolkit. Once the initial ten counties' broadband deployment needs have been addressed, access to the broadband development hub will be extended to the rest of West Virginia. In addition to the POWER grant, an additional \$50,000 for the hub is being provided through special ARC funding for broadband work in distressed West Virginia counties.

\$100,000 ARC grant to Region II Development Council, Inc. in Huntington, WV, for a strategic plan that will analyze the feasibility and economic impact of potential heritage tourism projects along West Virginia State Route 152, also known as the Appalachian Heartland Highway. The proposed study will be a coordinated and comprehensive regional planning effort to create a tourism cluster that increases the

chances of successfully restructuring the regional economy away from a reliance on the coal industry. A top priority will be to study the construction of an Appalachian Heartland Visitors Center at the interchange of Route 152 and I-64.

\$64,000 ARC grant to the National Coal Heritage Area Authority in Oak Hill, WV, to study natural and cultural heritage assets of the Tug Fork River and the communities along its banks. The 159-mile river runs through three states—Kentucky, West Virginia, and Virginia—and much of the region has been heavily impacted by the decline of the coal industry. This study would lay the foundation for the development of an outdoor recreation tourism sector by establishing the Tug Fork River as a recreational water trail. GIS technology will be utilized to identify and mark potential river access points, mile markers, and potential hazards. Local communities will be assisted in applying for Kentucky Blueway and West Virginia Water Trail designations. The resulting plan will complement existing county and regional efforts and elevate awareness of the region's natural and cultural assets.

SPECIAL REGIONAL PROJECTS

\$750,000 ARC grant to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and other federal partners to help continued collaborative research on effective interventions for opioid use disorders and related diseases in rural Appalachian coal communities. Appalachia faces disproportionate impacts from substance use disorders, as well as an increased risk for the spread of associated diseases such as HIV and hepatitis C. As part of a multi-year Federal effort that aims to implement and assess evidence-based interventions in rural areas, ARC funds will allow teams from the University of Kentucky and West Virginia University to continue research focused on coal-impacted communities in the Region. Successful completion of this effort will help establish and deploy best practices in the prevention and treatment of opioid use, HIV, and hepatitis, especially within the context of rural Appalachia.

\$184,595 to Chamberlin/Dunn, LLC of Indianapolis, IN, for a contract to monitor and evaluate the POWER Initiative thus far. In particular, contractors will work with ARC and its partners to determine the extent to which POWER grantees funded in Fiscal Years 2015-2017 are progressing toward their stated performance goals. Deliverables include monthly reports that provide a snapshot of grantee performance during that period. The purpose is to highlight success stories, flag potential challenges, and recommend technical assistance and training needs to ensure grantee success, particularly in performance monitoring and evaluation.