

IMPACT REPORT 2018



SOAR



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“Appalachia Kentucky, for many years, thrived not only on coal, but the ingenuity of those men and women who mined the coal. That same ingenuity, coupled with collaboration and innovation, can bring new opportunities to compete in a global and digital economy.”

Jared Arnett | Executive Director of SOAR

SOAR Overview

Our Vision, Mission & Values

Mission

SOAR's mission is to expand job creation, enhance regional opportunity, innovation, and identity, improve the quality of life, and support all those working to achieve these goals in Appalachian Kentucky.

Vision

An Appalachian Kentucky engaged in a landscape-changing enterprise: shaped by a shared and envisioned future, driven by innovation, entrepreneurship, and a commitment to common purpose, with improved education, health, and economic outcomes, and expanding opportunities, for all our region's citizens.

Core Values

FAITH

We believe in the impossible. Faith is at the core of our values, because we firmly believe in things we can't see. We envision an Appalachia full of opportunity and one that competes and thrives in the 21st Century economy. Everything we do today is guided by where we want to be tomorrow.

GRIT

We press on, even when it may seem easier to quit. It's a deep connection to our culture, one deeply entrenched in faith, family and work. That same grit and determination, an unwavering dedication to accomplish what we put our minds to, will be the catalyst that builds the 21st century Appalachia we so desire. We're required to overcome opposition, frustration, disappointment and discouragement.

TEAMWORK

Together. Everyone. Accomplishes. More. We will work together harmoniously and simultaneously, with vigor, to build a 21st Century Appalachia. We recognize, while we may work independently at times, the future of our region is dependent on one another.

LEADERSHIP

We commit to being the driving force that embraces and drives change to create a 21st Century Appalachia. As a leader in community and economic development, we will instill a spirit of collaboration among stakeholders that promotes unity and a collective vision and purpose. As a leader, we will add value to others and develop more leaders

SERVICE

We will put others first and demonstrate the traits of servant leadership to move our region forward. In service to build a 21st Century Appalachia, the individual successes will be celebrated and promoted as team successes.

COMPASSION

Our actions are driven by compassion. We act because we care about our neighbors and the future of the communities we serve.

PURPOSE

We live with purpose. Purpose is the overarching belief that we are part of something bigger than ourselves. Each and every partner has individual purpose to pursue in building a 21st Century Appalachia.

STRATEGY

Thinking and planning is critically important to building a 21st Century Appalachia. We believe there is significant, long-term benefits to spending adequate time focusing on what is important but not urgent. By being strategic, our work is driven by our Regional Blueprint, which is a guide to making our vision a reality.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We believe in providing and accepting accountability. As a Collective Impact organization, we commit to effectively communicating with our stakeholders and being a champion for accountability.

CREATIVITY

We are a future-focused organization that acknowledges and appreciates our past. We will approach issues in a creative, innovative and collaborative manner with a focus on the future. We will develop innovative solutions, outside of assumed barriers, and seek effective methods of implementation.

Executive Board of Directors



“

Each of you, our valued partners and supporters, make up the fabric of a movement that is rewriting the narrative of Appalachia Kentucky.

Kim McCann, Chairperson
SOAR Executive Board

Dear Valued Partners,

It is a distinct honor and privilege to be the Chairperson of the Executive Board of Shaping Our Appalachian Region, Inc. (SOAR). It is hard to believe that five years have passed since the idea of beginning this unifying effort took root throughout Appalachia Kentucky. The concept of forming an organization of bringing people together led by Congressman Rogers and Kentucky's Governor, exciting communities, motivating businesses and industries, and engaging stakeholders has led to collaborative and innovative ideas and transformative solutions for our region of Kentucky.



While we have made significant strides, there is still more work to do, and there always will be. The 21st Century Appalachia we envision cannot happen without your support. There are many ways you can be a part of SOAR and this movement. At the foundation of the transformation we need must be a dedication to succeed like we have never had before. In this report, you will see the evidence of success – the proof of how technology is disrupting poverty, the proof of industrial development, the proof of small business growth, and the proof of how the ingenuity of the people in our communities can create a brighter tomorrow for all of us.

If you have been a part of our work, I want to sincerely thank you. SOAR is an organization. Each of you, our valued partners and supporters, make up the fabric of an attitude that is rewriting our future and the narrative of Appalachia Kentucky. If you would like to partner in our work, I invite you to reach out to the SOAR team and learn more about ways you can play a part in the movement taking place across the region.

I hope you enjoy our 2018 Impact Report.

Kim McCann | Chairperson | SOAR Executive Board

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

Congressman Harold "Hal" Rogers
Governor Matt Bevin

CHAIRPERSON

Kim McCann
Partner at VanAntwerp
Attorneys

VICE CHAIRPERSON

Dr. French Harmon
Pastor of Somerset First
Baptist Church

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President, CEO
and Chairman of
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Bancorp,
Chairman of Finance
Committee

Jim Host
Retired CEO of Host
Communications,
Chairman of Personnel
Committee

Andrew Scott
Mayor of Coal
Run Village

Chuck Sexton
President/CEO of
One East Kentucky

Nate Haney
Senior Vice President
of Braidy Industries

Dan Mosley
Harlan County
Judge-Executive

Lynn Tipton
Paralegal at Tipton
and Tipton Law Firm

Scott Brinkman
Designee Proxy for
Governor Bevin

Karen Kelly
Designee Proxy for
Congressman Rogers

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

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CEO of Pikeville
Medical Center,
Treasurer

Robert Stivers
Senate President

David Osborne
Speaker of the House

Dr. Charles Hardin
Magoffin County
Judge-Executive

Albey Brock
Bell County
Judge-Executive



Five years ago, Appalachia Kentucky was at a crossroads. The economic challenges facing our region were profound. We had the choice to acknowledge our obstacles and overcome them, or simply give up. We chose to invest in our community with our time, energy, effort and faith. We rolled up our sleeves, we went to work, we addressed our challenges, we identified opportunities, and we came together to form Shaping Our Appalachian Region, Inc. (SOAR).

SOAR, the organization, is just a framework. The movement that is SOAR is a unifying and collaborative movement that represents all that makes these mountains and their inhabitants so unique. Our work demonstrates the power of people, the power of ideas, and the power of passion. We've created a Regional Blueprint for a 21st Century Appalachia to guide our work. This Blueprint has seven goals, and it is through each facet of the blueprint that we will utilize connectivity to transform our region.

Five years since SOAR's inception, it is important to reflect on the body of work that has taken place. Lives have been changed, communities revitalized, and ideas brought to fruition that will ensure the future of our region. However, there's still much work to do, and that work cannot happen without you.

This Impact Report is a small sample of the transformation taking place across Appalachia Kentucky. As you'll see, the advancements taking place are not singular or focused one specific area of interest or industry. It is diverse, from remote work, small business, tech, industrial recruitment, local food, tourism, healthcare and much, much more.

We believe the debate is over, **THERE IS A FUTURE IN APPALACHIA**. This declaration may seem bold, especially to those who have negatively stigmatized the region for decades. However, this declaration is at the core of everything we do. The 21st Century Appalachia we envision is one where opportunities exist for all whom seek it.

That's the Appalachia Kentucky we deserve, and that is the Appalachia Kentucky we will have if we continue to work together.

Warmest Regards,

Jared Arnett | Executive Director | SOAR

SOAR Staff

Jared Arnett
Executive Director

Joshua Ball
*Associate Executive
Director*

Keriston Smith
Chief Financial Officer

Jenna Meyer
CDC Public Health Advisor

Megan Williams
CDC Public Health Advisor

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Patrick Smith
AmeriCorps VISTA

SOAR Advisory Council

Phillip Elswick
Broadband

Jonathan Gay
Small Business

Nancy Hale
Health

Brad Hall
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Rodney Hitch
Industrial Development

Doug Jones
Small Business

Lonnie Lawson
Broadband

Phil Osborne
*Regional Tourism
Development*

Sandy Runyon
*Regional Tourism
Development*

Jeff Whitehead
Workforce

Daniel Wilson
Regional Food Systems

The Partners

Presenting Partners



Founding Partners



East Kentucky Partners



Unity Partners



Cornerstone Partners

BB&T - City of Pikeville - UPS

Grassroots Partners

Addiction Recovery Care - Advent Health Manchester - Alice Lloyd College - Appalachian Regional Healthcare - AppHarvest - Benham School House Inn - Christian Appalachian Project - Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program, Inc. - Inez Deposit Bank - Isaiah House - Kentucky One Health - Kentucky Skills U - Leadership Kentucky Foundation, Inc. - Members Choice Credit Union - Mission of Hope, Inc. - Office Resources, Inc. - The UPS Store - Toyota Tsusho - Three Rivers Medical Center - US Bank

Public Partners

Americorps Vista - Appalachian Regional Commission - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - State of Kentucky

SOAR Summit Recap

Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR) celebrated its fifth-annual summit at the East Kentucky Expo Center from August 30-31st. More than 1,200 people attended the main session and more than 600 people attended the first-ever Pre-Summit leadership session, including tracks on technology and health in Appalachia.

The 2018 Summit featured interactive exhibits that showcased innovation and collaboration taking place across the region. The exhibits were created with the aid of local talent and featured the technologically advanced capabilities available to private and business sectors through regionally accessible production.

“The 2018 SOAR Summit demonstrated the progress we have made across Appalachia Kentucky,” said Jared Arnett, executive director of SOAR. “Five years ago, people came to the Summit to share ideas. We listened and created the Regional Blueprint for a 21st Century Appalachia to guide our work. The 2018 Summit highlighted the proof that transformation is taking place, and we are leveraging technology to bring new opportunities to the people of Appalachia Kentucky.”

Panelists included a variety of experts in health and tech among other pertinent topics. Keynote speaker, Vinny Boles, retired US Army Major General, was on hand to deliver a compelling message of hope and determination.

Governor Matt Bevin spoke frankly about the region’s inherent opportunity. “This year’s SOAR summit showcases the unlimited potential that exists in Eastern Kentucky,” said Gov. Bevin. “Kentucky’s Appalachian region is home to entrepreneurs, business leaders, innovators, and change-makers that are committed to making a difference in their local communities, and they are putting their ideas into action. We are committed to coming alongside the local communities to identify resources and new opportunities to encourage further economic growth and development. The determination and drive in this region of our Commonwealth ensures that the future of Appalachia will be bright.”

SOAR Summit Mini Grant Recipients

Through the support of Branch Bank and Trust (BB&T), Shaping Our Appalachian Region, Inc. (SOAR) presented eight Innovation Mini Grants to organizations throughout Appalachia Kentucky at the 2018 SOAR Summit.

The City of Pineville and its Main Street program was the top innovation award. Through a collaboration of city and county government, public utilities, and the private sector, the city addressed low building occupancy in its Courthouse Square area by creating an attractive tax incentive program four years ago. The incentive package includes a tax moratorium at the city

and county level, free water services during construction, and free garbage services during construction and/or renovation. This incentive package has resulted in 100 percent occupancy in the Courthouse Square and \$8 million in public and private investments in the city.



BB&T

Other Innovation Mini-Grant recipients included: Rustic Charm Farm, Rural Up!, Kentucky Rail Heritage System, Owsley County Action Team and Teleworks USA, CMH23, Sister Cities (Prestonsburg & Beattyville), and Essentials for Santa (Duff-Allen Central Elementary School).

9 SPEAKERS • 15 PANELISTS



+1,200
SOAR SUMMIT ATTENDEES

76
INNOVATORS



There is a uture.org

Viewed in

57

countries

and

50

states

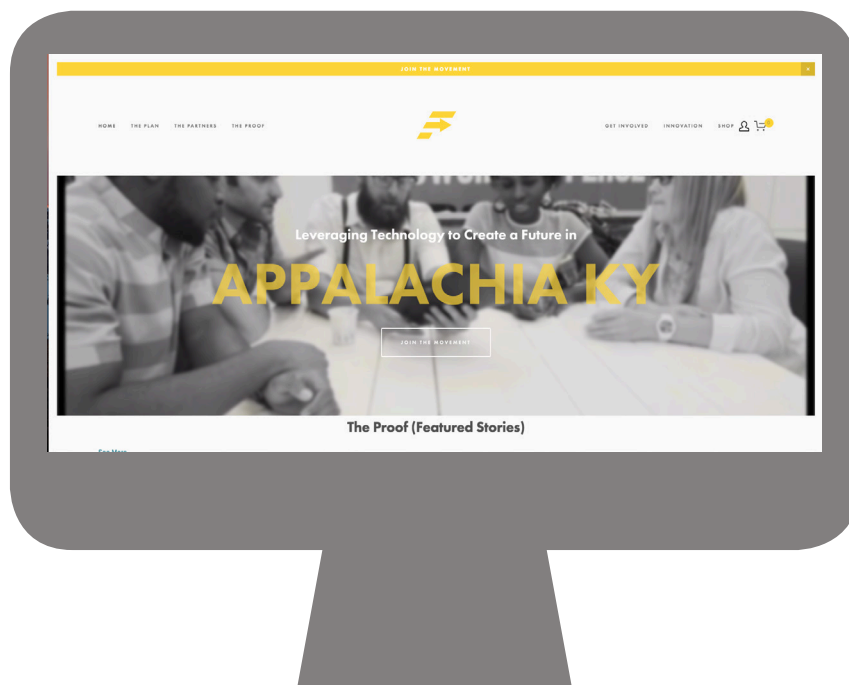
more than

250

stories told

Thereisafuture.org was launched in February 2018 to highlight the plan, the proof, and the partners of SOAR's Regional Blueprint. The goal is to frame a new narrative of Appalachia Kentucky by highlighting ingenuity, innovation, and collaboration. Since the launch, the site has shared more than 250 stories that align with SOAR's Regional Blueprint.

With over 42,000 unique page views in 50 states, and 57 countries our stories show the impact that collaboration, unity, and innovation has in our region.



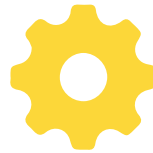
The Plan

Our Regional Blueprint for a 21st Century Appalachia was developed through input from nearly 2,000 individuals from across Appalachia Kentucky. The first goal is broadband connectivity and the other 6 are about what we're going to do with it. For the full plan, visit www.thereisafuture.org/plan.



BROADBAND

Make affordable high-speed broadband available to everyone.



INDUSTRY

Increase the amount of industrial employment which includes manufacturing, natural resources, processing, and distribution by expanding existing companies and attracting new ones



TALENT

Develop our regional workforce to be competitive in the digital economy and other emerging industries



LOCAL FOODS

Create a local foods movement by connecting local producers to markets for their products both within and outside the region



HEALTH

Reduce the physical and economic impact of obesity, diabetes, and substance abuse



TOURISM

Establish Kentucky's Appalachian region as a tourism destination



SMALL BUSINESS

To create more and expand existing small businesses within the region by taking full advantage of the digital economy

The Proof



SOAR selected to lead Innovation efforts across 40 Appalachia Kentucky Counties

The Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development's KY Innovation Office selected Shaping Our Appalachian Region, Inc. (SOAR) to lead its RISE, or Regional Innovation for Startups and Entrepreneurs, efforts in 40 Appalachia Kentucky counties in October 2018.

SOAR Innovation will launch in 2019 with nine full-time employees, including a director and eight business and innovation champions, strategically positioned across the region. Office locations will be in Ashland, Cumberland, Hazard, London, Morehead, Paintsville, and Pikeville.

The program will specifically focus on entrepreneurs, start-ups, and existing small businesses that wish to leverage technology to expand services and products to a national and global markets through e-commerce, export, and other areas.

SOAR's approach is to better connect and leverage existing resources already in place across Appalachia Kentucky and identify opportunities to enhance services through its network of partners and assistance from the Cabinet for Economic Development. The consortium of partners in SOAR

Innovation include: The Kentucky Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation, Southeast Kentucky Economic Development Corporation (SKED), Mountain Association for Community and Economic Development (MACED), Ashland Community and Technical College, Hazard Community and Technical College, Maysville Community and Technical College, Somerset Community College, Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College, University of Pikeville, Morehead State University, Eastern Kentucky University, the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program, Inc. (EKCEP), Teleworks USA, Digital Careers Now, Symbiosis, BitSource, WYMT, East Kentucky Broadcasting, Fairway Outdoor, Forcht Broadcasting, Community Trust Bank, and BB&T.

Business and Innovation Champions will work throughout a designated service area to identify and assist entrepreneurs, start-ups, and existing small businesses that wish to create a business or build capacity to an existing business or idea. The Champions will work much like case managers to assist clients through the pipeline of services provided in the SOAR Innovation toolkit.

The Center for Rural Development

Established in 1996 through the vision of U.S. Congressman Harold “Hal” Rogers The Center for Rural Development in Somerset, Kentucky is a 501c(3) nonprofit organization fueled by a mission to provide leadership that stimulates innovative and sustainable economic development solutions and a better way of life for the citizens we serve.

Broadband

The KentuckyWired project continues to move forward with over 800 miles of fiber-optic cable having been deployed thus far. The Center also announced that funding has been received to assist communities in planning local projects to extend the reach of KentuckyWired. This assistance will help fund feasibility studies, surveys and preliminary engineering, among other activities. The Center has conducted four, day-long, broadband workshops in a cooperative partnership with the Kentucky Association of Counties (KACo). This partnership allowed the Center to deliver training to a diverse group of county elected officials; including judges, magistrates and sheriffs.

Center Youth Programs

Rogers Scholars is a life-changing program where high school sophomores are given the opportunity to live and learn on a college campus. During the week-long camp, experts work with students on building their leadership and teambuilding skills, give them the opportunity for hands-on instructional training from professionals, and introduce them to nationally recognized business leaders and entrepreneurs. Upon completion of the program, Scholars are eligible to apply for more than \$8 million worth of scholarships

at 18 colleges and universities throughout the Commonwealth of Kentucky and one University in Tennessee.

Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium

The Center for Rural Development is a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) training provider and serves as the Executive Agent for the Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium (RDPC). The RDPC started in 2004 with a Continuing Training Grant Award from DHS. Training members consist of educational institutions across the United States and have specific capabilities in training America’s rural first responders.

RDPC has developed forty-two, instructor led courses, and twelve web-based courses. We deliver training to rural and tribal first responders in their communities across the nation. Since inception, RDPC has trained over 85,000 rural and tribal responders.

The vision of the RDPC is to see that rural communities across America will have the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to enhance the safety, security and quality of life for their citizens. Our target audience is rural and tribal responders with a population of 50,000 or less per jurisdiction



Healthy Communities Impact

SOAR Healthy Communities celebrated its three-year partnership with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 2018. With the CDC's continued support, SOAR has been able to support existing public health infrastructure and facilitate community engagement around critical health issues in the region. Organization around shared goals to reduce the impact of substance use disorder has resulted in transformational change to how complex challenges are tackled – through partnerships and collaborations that surpass traditional boundaries.



Implement innovative evidence-based programs to address regional health disparities in access, quality of care, and health outcomes.



Strengthen community partnerships and collaborations with stakeholders to increase focus on health and disease prevention throughout the region.



Reduce the scope and impact of substance abuse and related consequences through education, awareness, prevention and access to services.



Increase access to healthy, affordable foods and opportunities for physical activity.



**SOAR Summit
Breakout Session**



Provider Education



**Community
Engagement**



Fit+Grit 5k

960 Participants



Each  represents 20 people



240 - Summit Health Breakout Session



480 - Provider Education - Online



400 - Provider Education - Onsite



40 - SOAR Fit+Grit 5k

Operation UNITE

Unlawful Narcotics Investigations, Treatment and Education, or Operation UNITE, reflects the three-pronged, comprehensive approach deemed necessary to combating substance abuse in Kentucky.

“Operation UNITE’s purpose to ‘create hope and change the culture’ surrounding substance use issues must include efforts to reduce the availability of drugs and to provide treatment assistance for those with a substance use disorder. The key to lasting change, however, will be through pervasive and on-going prevention efforts – starting at an early age and continuing through adulthood,” said Nancy Hale, UNITE President & CEO. “With partners such as SOAR, it is possible to empower youth to remain free from alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and other drugs and to provide them the tools to make positive, healthy choices throughout their lives.”



Nancy Hale
UNITE President & CEO

- **HELP LINE:** provides resources and support to anyone seeking help with substance use disorder
- **The KY HELP Statewide Call Center:** provides resources and support to families and people seeking help.
- **Treatment Voucher Program:** financial assistance to obtain long-term residential treatment
- **UNITE Clubs:** empowering 4-12 grade students to develop healthy attitudes and behaviors
- **Camp UNITE:** A week-long residential drug awareness leadership/adventure program for middle school-aged youth
- **UNITE Community Coalitions:** work to implement education and treatment initiatives while supporting the investigative component.

To learn more about Operation UNITE, please visit www.operationunite.org

Help End Addiction for Life (HEAL)

No longer willing to let the disease of addiction claim lives and destroy futures – the people of Letcher County have replaced the hopelessness and despair of addiction with collaboration, opportunity and action. Under the compassionate leadership of a nationally renowned family physician, Dr. Van Breeding of **Mountain Comprehensive Health Care Corporation**, and the dedicated support of regional and state acclaimed organizations - **Appalachian Regional Healthcare (ARH)** and **Addiction Recovery Care** - barriers to integrated care and timely treatment are being broken down. Cross sector, partnerships have supported an approach to combatting addiction that is both innovative and impactful. A movement that began with the proclamation that solutions must be designed and implemented by people and organizations willing to step up and take action is now being tailored and duplicated across the region. To learn more about this initiative, please visit: www.healky.org.



If you would like to learn more, please visit www.SOAR-ky.org/healthycommunities



ODSave

Inspired by the first SOAR Summit in 2014, Bit Source was created as a digital services company with a unique mission - to convert former coal miners to software developers; create a tech sector in eastern Kentucky and revitalize an economy which previously relied on the mining and production of coal.

Two years later, MIT and SOAR cohosted a Hack-a-thon in Somerset, Kentucky with the goal of creating digital solutions to tackle some of the most significant health challenges in Appalachia. According to the Journal of the American Medical Association, the mean time for EMS response in rural areas of America is 14.5 minutes. In areas of Pike County Kentucky, EMS response time is often **four times the national mean**, with wait times of more than an hour. This delay in the delivery of Narcan to potential overdose victims may contribute to the number of opioid deaths, which reached 18.7 per 100,000 in 2017. Bit Source collaborated with students and healthcare professionals on the idea of a mobile app that would connect potential opioid overdose victims to responders with Narcan, in many cases much more quickly than the usual 911 response time.

Two years of research, development and testing resulted in the ODSave app, available free on Google Play and the Apple App Store. A pilot project is being launched now in Pike County, building a network of responders who are supplied with Narcan and are trained to use it. The next step will be a campaign to encourage downloads of the app by the general public, who may become requesters in the event they witness a potential overdose.

With assistance and cooperation from organizations like Pike County Emergency Management, local volunteer fire departments and rescue squads, the University of Pikeville, and Pikeville Medical Center; Bit Source intends to launch ODSave in Pike County first, but there's a national and even global potential for its use.

Google Creative Labs

Bit Source launched in 2014, and the compelling story went viral, reaching millions of people through world-wide media coverage. The coverage eventually piqued the attention of Google, and in the fall of 2017, Google offered to produce a short video piece to help tell the Bit Source story.

In the summer of 2018, representatives from Bit Source went to Google headquarters to partake in a fireside chat and attended a Grow with Google event. Following the event Bit Source attended the Google Developer Agency meet-up. Bit Source is now proud to be a Google Agency which means that Bit Source gets early access to Google technology in order to better serve our clients. This collaboration has proved invaluable to our growth and development; we're proud to be a SOAR-inspired Appalachian company *and* a Google Agency.

Benham Schoolhouse Inn

One of Bit Source's most engaging clients has been the Benham Schoolhouse Inn. An EKCEP partnership allowed us to work with them to spur economic opportunity via software solutions. The outcome was www.benhaminn.com, the Benham Schoolhouse Inn website. The site features the Inn's offerings in a style that suits its historic, elegant, and somewhat rustic nature. Bit Source has participated in several events and overnight outings at the Inn and we are proud to support its mission and historic preservation, as well as enjoy its experiential charm.



Digital Careers NOW

Digital Careers NOW is a \$3.5 million investment by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) designed to change the business landscape of Eastern Kentucky. The overarching mission or vision of the program is to be the 21st century vehicle of influence in Eastern Kentucky to grow its digital economy. The consortium of partners includes: Shaping Our Appalachian Region, Inc. (SOAR), the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program, Inc. (EKCEP), Hazard Community and Technical College, Big Sandy Community and Technical College, and Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College.

Collaborative efforts of these agencies are providing communities, individuals, and businesses a valuable training resource and careers in the following sectors: advanced manufacturing, medical technology, information technology and cybersecurity. Measurable results are producing powerful economic impacts upon the communities and residents of 16 Eastern Kentucky counties. Within the first sixteen months of a three-year grant cycle, the program served 300 individuals and resulted in 184 new hires with the following five companies: Prospere, American Metal Works, Granada Insurance Company, Campbell's Excavating and Plumbing, and General Dynamics Information Technology.

In 2018, the partnership with General Dynamics brought 100 total jobs through the Cumberland and Hazard Digital Careers NOW Innovation Hubs (50 at each location). This announcement represented an estimated \$1 million in new revenue for the two

communities. Those employed will be working for General Dynamics on a contract with the United States Office of Citizenship and Immigration Services.

The end goal of the three-year grant is to connect 300 career seekers with employers who are ready to hire, and Digital Careers NOW is making significant progress towards this outcome. During the first year, the program achieved significant progress assisting businesses in their training needs, while at the same time changing the lives of program participants.

Digital Careers NOW is paving the way for the future of Eastern Kentucky's Workforce needs through innovation, remote employment opportunities, training, and job creation. This business model is employer driven and provides rapid, real-time training for ready-made jobs and is experiencing accelerated success in developing a fast-growing digital economy throughout Appalachia Kentucky.



The Digital Careers NOW program at Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College is delivering opportunity to Eastern Kentucky. Through an innovative partnership with General Dynamics Information Technology and the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, careers are now available. As a customer service representative with GDIT you will serve as a ‘candle in the window’ by providing guidance and support to international travelers as they navigate through their journey to a better life in America.”

Brian Overstreet
Customer Service Representative
General Dynamics

Peer Support Academy provides a way for those in recovery to be gainfully employed, give back

Tim Robinson, the founder and chief executive officer of Addiction Recovery Care (ARC), experienced friendship, training and mentoring during his early recovery – someone who had struggled with alcoholism helped Robinson walk out his recovery. That opportunity led to a calling to open ARC and to create a platform for others to do the same.

“That experience planted a seed that recovery is real, and that some of the best people to help those in recovery are those who are successfully walking along that path,” said Robinson.

That vision, coupled with federal and state policies that made addiction treatment more accessible, led to the creation of ARC’s Peer Support Academy. The academy is a collaboration of ARC, a Grassroots Partner of Shaping Our Appalachian Region, Inc. (SOAR), the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program, Inc. (EKCEP), also a grassroots partner of SOAR, and Sullivan University.

A Peer Support Specialist (PSS) is not intended to replace clinical staff but instead complements that staff and provides, in most cases, a mentor for those trying to beat addiction. A PSS is a person who has been clean, sober and in recovery at least one year and has successfully completed a training program.

“Imagine being in a hospital recovering from an overdose and a peer support specialist walks in your room. They begin to talk to that person and they realize that they are active in their recovery. They’ve been there, and they’ve done that. They can pull up a photo from their past, and they can see what the future holds,” explained Robinson. “That’s powerful for those

in addiction, and it is powerful for those who have successfully completed the training to be a Peer Support Specialist and wish to pay it forward and give back.”

That’s exactly what Jonathan McKenzie did. He successfully completed treatment at ARC and completed its Peer Support Specialist Academy, which has graduated 80 people. Of that 80, 65 are gainfully employed and 50 of them work for ARC. Approximately half of ARC’s 500 employees are in recovery.

“My life is as complete as ever,” said Jonathan McKenzie, an August 2018 peer support specialist graduate who works at Stone Lodge, ARC’s men’s transitional learning center in Lawrence County. “This opportunity has allowed me to restore my relationship with my family, cultivate true friendships and relationships, and a relationship with God. For the first time in my life, I am proud of what I see in the mirror. I don’t dread getting up each morning, because I know I am witnessing God work in my life and the lives of others.”

The Peer Support Specialist program at ARC is just a part of the organization’s philosophy of taking those in treatment from **crisis to career**. The organization has a team of dedicated outreach and support specialists that assist with career training that works harmoniously with treatment to help equip clients with skills to find employment as they continue their pathway to recovery. ARC operates a training center that helps clients find remote work opportunities. They have also recently launched Second Chance Auto where former clients work as mechanics to repair cars, including the routine maintenance of all vehicles in ARC’s fleet. Second Chance Auto is located in Louisa.

ARC operates 30 programs across 12 counties in Kentucky.



**ADDICTION
RECOVERY
CARE**

80

Graduates since
May 2017

65

Gainfully
Employed

50

Employed
by Addiction
Recovery Care

Finding Hope in Recovery

The sound of a gavel banging and the dramatic clang of cell doors aren't typically associated with hope. In this case, the judicial system saved Allison Rose's life.

On June 28, 2018, Allison found herself facing charges for paraphernalia and complicity to traffic methamphetamine in Letcher County. This was not her first drug-related charge. She had several other non-violent crimes and convictions under her name, all related to her struggle with drugs. This arrest was different, though. Allison was approaching her fourth month of pregnancy. Her pregnancy was confirmed in jail and her first ultrasound was performed while she was incarcerated. Luckily for Rose, Judge Mullins was presiding over her case.

"I've known Allison all of her life. I went to school with her older sister. I know their mother. She comes from a good family," said Mullins. "I was sad for her, but I was also sad for her mother and for her kids."

Appalachia Kentucky is no stranger to the scourge of addiction. Communities across the region are burdened by the economic and social impact of the disease and the effects it has on families. Letcher County has seen a tremendous rise in drug-related crimes in recent years.

According to Letcher County District Judge Kevin Mullins, the number of drug related incarcerations has created a serious problem in the county jail, where occupancy has nearly tripled and drastically exceeded allotted bed space.

"We can't keep doing the same things and expect something to change. It just hasn't worked," he said.

Mullins has created a network of resources for those facing him in the courtroom on drug-related charges. Tilly Everman, who works at Addiction Recovery Care (ARC), is in the court room on a weekly basis to assist addicted candidates to treatment. Everman and her coworker, Michael Clark, both graduates of ARC treatment applaud Judge Mullins for being integral in changing the culture of the court system for addicts in Letcher County.

"He [Judge Mullins] gets it," said Clark. "He knows that these are people with mothers and fathers and kids who care about them. He knows that if they can clean up, they'll be tax payers, employees, parents and people who contribute."

Mullins proudly keeps a copy of every certificate of completion from the men and women who he has sent to recovery programs. To date, he has more than 100 certificates in his collection, and he remembers details about many of the individuals represented by each piece of



paper. He estimates that the rate of re-offense for those in recovery to be roughly 17% (based on his calculations from the local inmate population) versus the current statistic of 68% for those who have not sought help with recovery.

Allison was offered the opportunity to complete a residential treatment program for expectant and new mothers at Karen's Place, part of ARC's extended network of residential facilities, in Lawrence County. Karen's Place integrates clinical treatment with a faith-based recovery model.

Over time, Allison began to accept her new-found recovery. She started leading groups at Karen's Place and reestablished communication with her family. Letters from her daughter encouraged her to stay focused on her health and recovery. Mending her relationship with her mother gave her tremendous peace and hope for the future.

On November 20, Allison welcomed Kayleigh Danni-Lynn Rose. Kayleigh was born perfectly healthy, in her mother's likeness and with no signs of her mother's former drug abuse. In response to being asked what she attributes Kayleigh's health Allison said, "God. This is a miracle. She [Kayleigh] is a miracle."

On December 14, 2018, Allison left Karen's Place and returned to her mother's home. She was met with tears of joy and relief from her children. Her three older siblings were thrilled to celebrate the holidays with their new baby sister.

She attributes her faith to her ultimate healing. Now, she too accepts that she is part of a miracle, "If God hadn't intervened, he [her former partner] would've killed me or the drugs would've, I had lost all hope and will to live, the odds were stacked against me..."

With the odds now in her favor, Allison embraces her newfound hope and overwhelming gratitude. "This [treatment and recovery] has enabled me to be the mother my children deserve and the daughter my mother deserves. As long as you still have breath, there's hope. You deserve a place here on this Earth. You are worth it."



The ongoing partnership between SOAR and the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (EKCEP), Inc. continues to boost opportunities for Eastern Kentucky jobseekers in the digital economy.

Through EKCEP's Teleworks USA division, more than 1,900 digital economy jobs have been created in the region since 2015, including more than 600 in 2018 alone. Teleworks USA identifies and develops legitimate remote-work job opportunities with multiple national and global companies. The agency operates Teleworks Hubs in eight Eastern Kentucky counties, which provide on-site services, customized prep workshops, and telework job-placement opportunities to prospective teleworkers.

SOAR played an instrumental role in the formation of Owsley County's Booneville Teleworks Hub, awarding the project \$95,000 through Kentucky's Dept. of Local Government. Those funds, along with support from EKCEP, the Owsley County Action Team, Owsley County Fiscal Court, Peoples Rural Telephone Cooperative, Jackson Energy Cooperative, and USDA Rural Development allowed the Booneville Teleworks Hub to open in July 2016.

Owsley County is one of Kentucky's smallest counties in terms of population, with just more than 4,400 people living there in 2017. The county seat of Booneville recorded a population of less than 100 people as of the 2010 census.

Since the opening of the Booneville Teleworks Hub in 2016, more than **220** people have landed new telework jobs in Owsley County, including **81** in 2018 alone, representing more than **\$1.8 million** in new wages for the county this year. These jobs can include customer service, tech support, or other similar positions that can be performed from a home office via high-speed broadband connection.

Remote Employer Partners

Many of the jobs for which Teleworks USA helps connect prospective teleworkers result from opportunities as relayed to the agency by a number of TUSA's employer partners, including major global companies such as KellyConnect, Conduent, Sykes, and others.

And while Teleworks USA enjoys a number of beneficial partnerships, the agency continually works to add new companies to its stable of remote employer partners who can provide new digital economy job opportunities to Eastern Kentucky's workforce. As a result, nearly a dozen employers from across the nation were able to see up close and in person how Teleworks USA has helped expand the telework industry into Eastern Kentucky during a three-day Teleworks Open House Tour hosted April 16-18, 2018.

The group, which included representatives from Amazon, BroadPath Healthcare Solutions, Delegate Solutions, FlexJobs, Hilton Hotels and Resorts, Itelbpo, Nimble Connect, Sutherland, Sykes, VIPKID, and Williams-Sonoma, visited four of the eight Teleworks USA Hub locations (Annville, Harlan, Hazard, and Pike County), met with current teleworkers and Teleworks USA clients, and heard from local and regional community supporters about the positive benefits the agency provides to the local economies where Hub operate.

SOAR Coordinates Partnership with FlexJobs

The tour of Eastern Kentucky was made possible through SOAR and Teleworks USA's partnership with FlexJobs, the nation's leading online service for professionals seeking remote, flexible employment. After meeting FlexJobs' top officials in September 2017 at a national conference in Washington, D.C., Teleworks USA staff began multiple conversations with a host of FlexJobs partner companies with whom Teleworks USA could partner to merge those companies' workforce needs with Eastern Kentucky's need for remote work jobs.

FlexJobs researches thousands of job listings to provide clients with access to hand-screened flexible job opportunities quickly and easily. Flexible jobs can mean remote, part-time, or freelance positions. Since its formation in 2007, the company has quickly become the nation's foremost advocate for remote work opportunities and could help create an influx of even more solutions to unemployment for hundreds of Eastern Kentucky residents.

For jobseekers, the partnership between FlexJobs and Teleworks USA means clients will not only have access to Teleworks USA's jobs list and proven digital economy workshops, but will also benefit from FlexJobs' database of vetted employment opportunities.

USDA Grant Allows Teleworks USA Expansion

As part of the agency's mission to connect Eastern Kentuckians with new job opportunities in the digital economy, Teleworks USA announced in October 2018 the addition of two new managers on staff who will work to expand services in six counties.

Lawrence County resident Regina Tackett was hired as the Lawrence County Teleworks Hub Manager, while Amy Nunn, of Jackson County, serves in the newly created position of Teleworks USA Outreach Manager. Both positions were made possible thanks to a U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) of nearly \$100,000 awarded in September 2018 to the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (EKCEP), Inc.

As the full-time Lawrence County Teleworks Hub Manager, Tackett will directly serve Lawrence County residents at the Hub, located at 180 Bulldog Lane in Louisa. She will also conduct regular outreach visits in neighboring Carter and Elliott counties at the offices of project partner Northeast Kentucky Community Action Agency to recruit people to the Lawrence County Teleworks Hub for scheduled workshops.

As Teleworks USA's Outreach Manager, Nunn will mainly work to serve citizens in Menifee, Morgan, and Wolfe counties, where Teleworks USA does not currently operate a Hub facility. She will work to promote and provide Teleworks USA services through scheduled, ongoing outreach visits at local offices of project partners Gateway Community Action Agency and Wolfe County Fiscal Court.

Nunn will also deliver accelerated digital-economy workshops, host job fairs and hiring events, and recruit people to nearby Teleworks Hubs in Lee, Jackson, and Owsley counties for scheduled workshops.

The USDA awarded Teleworks USA its first \$100,000 RBDG in 2017, which supported the creation, opening, and operation of the Lawrence County Teleworks Hub throughout its first year. Additional project partners included the Lawrence County Fiscal Court, Northeast Kentucky Community Action Agency, Kentucky Power, Lycom Communications, Foothills Communications, Louisa Rotary Club, Sullivan University, State Farm Insurance, Walmart, Inez Deposit Bank, Quality Metal New Energy Resources, and Best Western.

In the Hub's first year, Teleworks USA helped place **69** citizens in remote, work-at-home jobs, resulting in a potential, estimated **\$1.6 million** in new annual wages pending job retention.

Harlan Tri-Cities to benefit from \$2.55 AML Pilot grant

In October 2018, SOAR Principal Officers Congressman Hal Rogers and Governor Matt Bevin announced a \$2.55 million Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Pilot grant for the Tri-Cities region of Harlan County.

The thought of an AML Pilot grant originated when AML State Director Bob Scott attended the 2017 SOAR Summit and heard the story of Lonnie Riley, founder of Meridzo Ministries. Shortly after the Summit, Scott and other officials from the state AML office attended a listening session in the community of Lynch.

"That's where the seed was planted," said Riley. "I think this is a perfect example of what SOAR can do for folks. This encounter led to the conversations that resulted in the grant being awarded."

The project will involve refurbishing the electronics and controls of animated figures, upgrading audiovisual systems, lighting, and control functions of the Portal 31 Exhibition Mine Tour, and fixing drainage in the exhibition mine tunnels and making structural repairs to tunnel roof structures. In addition, adjacent mine areas will be cleaned to accommodate a new walking tour and an additional mantrip vehicle will be purchased.

The Black Mountain portion of the project will create a new parking area with a scenic overlook, which will lead to a new walking trail that will take visitors to the overlook at the summit of Black Mountain - the highest natural point in Kentucky. A proposed 40-foot-high observation tower will provide a scenic view of Kentucky and Virginia.

The Lynch Bathhouse and administrative building adjacent to Portal 31 will be renovated to increase office space. The renovation also will provide space for a planned dulcimer factory and other crafts, a planned coffee roasting company, and enlarge an existing mushroom growing operation operated by Meridzo Ministries.

Braidy Industries begins to build

Braidy Industries continues to make progress on its \$1.68 billion aluminum rolling mill (Braidy Atlas) at the EastPark Industrial Center in northeastern Kentucky.

The company broke ground in June 2018 and construction has begun. In addition, Braidy Industries completed the acquisition of Veloxint Corporation, a MIT-incubated light-weighting technology company that creates some of the strongest and lightest metal ever manufactured. Veloxint will employ approximately 150 people and be co-located with Braidy Atlas. In September 2018, Braidy Industries acquired NanoAl, an ultra-high-strength aluminum technology provider.

Braidy Industries furthered its focus on community this year. It has contributed over \$275,000 to over seventy local charities, primary focused on the youth of northeastern Kentucky. Additionally, Braidy will give a \$1,000 scholarship to a student recipient in every high school within Boyd, Carter and Greenup Counties in 2019.

SOAR Principal Officers Congressman Hal Rogers and Governor Matt Bevin announced \$4 million in Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) funds would be used to help prepare the foundation on the reclaimed coal mine where the Braidy Atlas Mill will operate.

SilverLiner building world-class tankers with a world-class workforce

SilverLiner, a premier tank manufacturer, will move into a new manufacturing facility at the Kentucky Enterprise Industrial Park in Pikeville, Ky. In early 2019. The company has assembled a national sales team and currently employs 29 people with plans to expand. SilverLiner CEO Chris Tomlinson said, "I wanted to build the best tanks in the business, and I knew if I wanted to accomplish that, I needed to build in eastern Kentucky where I could find a quality workforce." The response to SilverLiner has been overwhelming and a true testament to the quality of workforce in Appalachia Kentucky. The initial call for employees was met by over 3,000 qualified applicants. The spec building SilverLiner will call home was constructed through \$5 million in funding provided by the Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Pilot Program.



Toyota Tsusho makes investment in Southeast Community and Technical College Makerspace

Southeast Community and Technical College received a \$30,000 gift from Toyota Tsusho America, Inc., a grassroots partner of Shaping Our Appalachian Region, Inc. (SOAR) to create an advanced manufacturing makerspace on the college's Middlesboro campus. The makerspace will open in 2019. SOAR connected Toyota Tsusho to the opportunity at the college after learning of the company's desire to assist entrepreneurs and small businesses through financial support and its global network of employees who represent many different industry sectors.

"Toyota Tsusho is proud to be a part of the project at Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College," said Matt Nunn, general manager for Toyota Tsusho America, Inc. "As an eastern Kentucky native, I know, firsthand, the ingenuity and work ethic that resides in this region. This investment has the potential to grow the advanced manufacturing industry across Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College's service area. We are thankful for organizations like SOAR that are working to bring communities and organizations together to bring impactful solutions to the challenges facing the region."

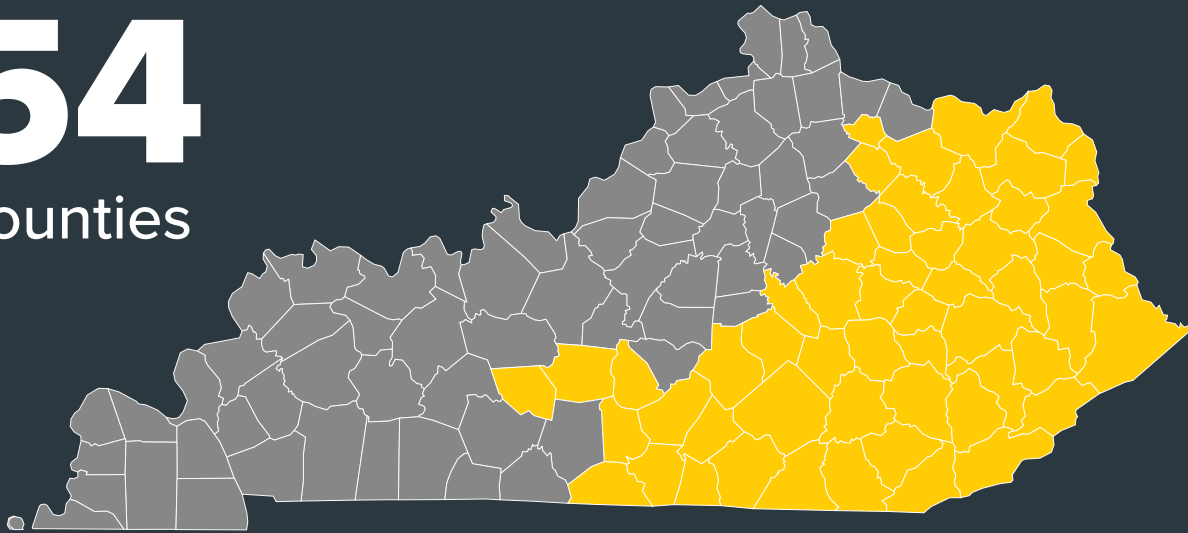
The investment from Toyota Tsusho will be used in addition to grant funding from the Economic Development Agency (EDA) and Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) to create the makerspace, which will feature state-of-the-art machining equipment, 3D printers, and other equipment. It will be open to students, aspiring entrepreneurs, and existing small businesses. Those utilizing the makerspace will also have access to extensive mentoring opportunities through Toyota Tsusho's global leadership.

SOAR on the Road

SOAR's work throughout Appalachia Kentucky has gained national attention. From regional capacity building, collaborative programs to improve health outcomes, and leveraging technology to disrupt poverty, SOAR's innovative approach to transforming Appalachia begins with the ingenuity of the human capital that exists throughout the region, and the ability to reframe that ingenuity to thrive in a digital and global economy.

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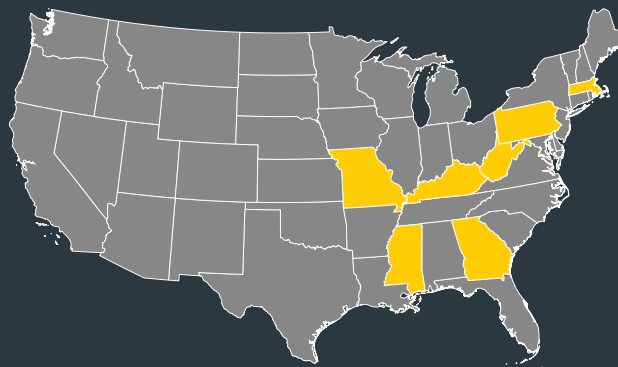
counties



Adair - Bath - Bell - Boyd - Breathitt - Carter - Casey - Clark - Clay - Clinton - Cumberland - Edmonson - Elliott - Estill - Fleming - Floyd - Garrard - Green - Greenup - Harlan - Hart - Jackson - Johnson - Knott - Knox - Laurel - Lawrence - Lee - Leslie - Letcher - Lewis - Lincoln - McCreary - Madison - Magoffin - Martin - Menifee - Metcalfe - Monroe - Montgomery - Morgan - Nicholas - Owsley - Perry - Pike - Powell - Pulaski - Robertson - Rockcastle - Rowan - Russell - Wayne - Whitley - Wolf

Events include:

- MIT REAP
- ARC Annual Conference
- Southern Legislative Conference
- Remake Learning Tour
- National Rural Entrepreneurship Summit
- RX Summit
- Broadband Communities Conference



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states

Pennsylvania - Georgia - Kentucky - Massachusetts
- Missouri - Mississippi - West Virginia

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