
Impact 2019 Report

a SOAR publication

The background of the lower half of the cover features a large, stylized 'X' shape formed by four overlapping triangles. The top-left and bottom-right triangles are dark blue, while the top-right and bottom-left triangles are orange. In the center, where all four triangles overlap, is a light gray diamond shape. The SOAR logo is centered within this gray diamond.

SOAR

CREATING A FUTURE IN APPALACHIA. TOGETHER.



Impact 2019 Report

Mission

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 what others may deem impossible.

GRIT | We press on, even when it may seem easier to quit.

TEAMWORK | We will work together harmoniously and simultaneously, with vigor, to build a 21st Century Appalachia.

LEADERSHIP | We commit to be the driving force that embraces, and drives change to create a future in Appalachia.

SERVICE | We will put others first and demonstrate the traits of servant leadership to move our region forward.

COMPASSION | We act because we care about our neighbors and the futures of the communities we serve.

PURPOSE | Purpose is the overarching belief that we are part of something bigger than ourselves.

STRATEGY | We believe there are significant, long-term benefits to spending adequate time focusing on what is important but not urgent.

ACCOUNTABILITY | We believe in providing and accepting accountability.

CREATIVITY | We approach opportunities in a creative, innovative, and collaborative manner with a focus on the future.

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SOAR is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that is a champion for Appalachia Kentucky. Through collaboration and innovation, we have established a network of partners, representing individuals, organizations, and businesses, who unequivocally believe THERE IS A FUTURE IN APPALACHIA.



Doing things that have never been done.



Welcome Note

SOARIMPACT

Achieving outcomes that have never been realized

“Our work is not easy, but it is necessary.”

At the 2019 SOAR Summit, our theme was: To achieve outcomes that have never been realized, you must do things that have never been done. Simply put, SOAR has and continues to do things that have never been done.

When I was hired as the founding executive director in 2014, I made a commitment to our board, our partners, and the citizens of Appalachia Kentucky that our work would be built on impact. Impact is defined as the action of one object coming forcibly into contact with another. As a verb, it is defined as having an effect on someone or something.

Our work – and that of our more than 240 partners – is guided by a Blueprint for the Future of Appalachia. It is impactful at its core and it is collective by our resolve to work together to not only create opportunities, but to seize every opportunity to create a brighter tomorrow.

Our 2019 Impact Report is a snapshot of the cross-sector collaborations happening across the region. From remote work, to innovation-driven small businesses and entrepreneurs, tourism, healthy communities, industrial recruitment, and beyond, the complexities of our challenges are no match to our ingenuity to reach higher, dream bigger, and reimagine our region and its rightful place in the digital economy.



SOAR and our impact is not contingent on any one sector, person or persons, business, or organization. It is dependent on our ability to unite behind our shared vision of an Appalachia Kentucky that is connected, innovative, and home to endless opportunities for all who seek them.

We've made so many strides, and while we should take time to celebrate the progress we have made, I want to encourage you to double-down and continue to press forward. Our work is not easy, but it is necessary.

Without you, SOAR is just another acronym. Because of you, SOAR is recognized as a redefining movement that is truly “Shaping Our Appalachian Region.”

Warmest Regards,
Jared Arnett | Executive Director

Welcome Note

SOAR **IMPACT**

Dear valued partners

“We’ve reimagined our communities, the way we work, and the way we do business.”

I have had the honor of serving on the Executive Board of SOAR since its inception. When the idea of SOAR was being developed, we all knew an organization such as this was needed, but we also knew that its success would be dependent upon our ability to come together and work together.

We’ve done just that, and the results have been impactful and transformational. We’ve watched ideas turn into life-changing realities that have impacted thousands of lives. We’ve reimagined our communities, the way we work, and the way we do business.

Communities across Appalachia Kentucky have leveraged technology and connectivity to create opportunities to compete and thrive in the digital economy. Entrepreneurs are no longer thinking about their customers within a radius of miles, but instead leveraging e-commerce to sell their products and services to the world. Thousands are working remotely for global companies, and these virtual investments are bringing millions in taxable revenues into our local economies.



As we reflect on our impact and look ahead, I want you to know that the progress we have made has and will always be a collective effort. Your support and commitment to our Blueprint has laid the foundation to impact Appalachia Kentucky for generations to come.

Moving forward, I want to encourage you to dream bigger and reach higher. We’ve come so far, but our potential has no limits because of the passion that resides in our people.

Sincerely,
Kimberly S. McCann | SOAR Executive Board Chair
VanAntwerp Attorneys

SOAR Executive Board

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

Congressman Harold “Hal” Rogers

Governor Andy Beshear

Governor Matt Bevin – Served from December 2015 to December 2019

CHAIRPERSON

Kimberly McCann | Partner at VanAntwerp Attorneys

VICE-CHAIR

French Harmon | Senior Pastor of Somerset First Baptist Church

MEMBERS

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

Nate Haney | Vice President of Braidy Industries | Chairman of Finance Committee

Jean Hale | President, CEO and Chairman of Community Trust Bancorp

Chuck Sexton | President/CEO of One East Kentucky

Andrew Scott | Mayor of Coal Run Village

Dan Mosley | Harlan County Judge-Executive

Lynn Tipton | Paralegal at Tipton and Tipton

Karen Kelly is the designee proxy for Congressman Rogers

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Donovan Blackburn | CEO of Pikeville Medical Center | Treasurer

Robert Stivers | Senate President

David Osborne | Speaker of the House

Albey Brock | Bell County Judge-Executive

SOAR STAFF

Jared Arnett | Executive Director

Joshua Ball | Associate Executive Director

Keriston Smith | Chief Financial Officer

Ryan Jones | Director of Business and Innovation

Tal Jones | Business and Innovation Champion

Colby Fugate | Business and Innovation Champion

Jeffery Justice | Business and Innovation Champion

Sabrina McWhorter | Business and Innovation Champion

Margaret A. Riggs, PhD, MPH, MS | CDC Liaison

Hanna Gabbard | AmeriCorps VISTA

V I S I T

SOAR-KY.ORG

SOAR **IMPACT**

Program of Work

Our Organizational Strategies

01**GROW THE NETWORK**

- Increase the Number of Partners in our Formalized Network
- Increase the Capacity of all Stakeholders
- Establish Shared Measurement Practices

02**DRIVE ALIGNED ACTION**

- Increase the Amount of Innovative Activity Aligned with the Blueprint
- Increase Awareness of the Aligned Activity Among Partners
- Improve Cross-Sector Collaboration

03**BE THE CHAMPION**

- Promote and Inspire Appalachia
- Guide Vision and Strategy as the Respected Thought Leader
- Advance Policy and Build Public Will

TACTICAL AREAS How we implement this Program of Work is through:

Convenings

- SOAR leverages its network of partners to host, co-host, and sponsor a variety of convenings ranging from community planning sessions, networking events for small businesses, startups, and entrepreneurs, and regional and cross-sector workshops and training sessions. The largest annual convening is the SOAR Summit. In 2019, more than 1,300 people attended the Summit and more than 90 businesses and organizations showcased their work and impact across the region.

Communications

- Communication is a key element to SOAR's Program of Work. SOAR's communication channels are vast, including e-mail, social media, websites, and other media outlets (radio, television, billboards, and digital).

Consultations

- SOAR's experience in building cross-sector collaborations, driving innovation, and leveraging technology to disrupt poverty has allowed the organization to lead and be a part of many transformative efforts across Appalachia Kentucky. SOAR has been actively engaged in more than 100 projects in 2019, and through our Business and Innovation team, more than 200 small businesses, startups, and entrepreneurs are receiving services ranging from technical assistance, marketing, website, and finance.

SOARIMPACT

Convenings

2019 Summit Recap

More than 1,300 people attended the 2019 SOAR Summit on September 5-6 at the Appalachian Wireless Arena in Pikeville.

The two-day event featured more than 90 businesses and organizations that showcased projects and outcomes aligned with SOAR's Blueprint for the Future of Appalachia.

Major Dan Rooney, a combat pilot, PGA golf professional, and the founder of the non-profit, Folds of Honor was the keynote speaker.

He encouraged those in attendance to acquire volition in their lives.

Volition is defined as the power of one's will. Major Rooney came to know this term in a college course when an

instructor simply wrote the word on a whiteboard. That term changed his life and that, along with his faith, has helped to inspire thousands across the globe.

"You can change and do anything if you get to this point," he said.

Major Rooney also shared the story of him telling his father what he wanted to be when he grew up.

"I told him I wanted to be a fighter pilot and professional golfer," Rooney added. He admitted that as a child many thought that was a unique combination. His father didn't question his choice, but the next question would define Major Rooney's remarkable journey in life. "He [my father] then asked me what direction a plane takes off? I replied,

'into the wind.'" "How appropriate is it for SOAR... The headwind we face in Eastern Kentucky will create the resistance for us to fly."

In a first for the Summit, SOAR leveraged the crowdsourcing platform, Slido, to allow those in attendance to answer questions and share ideas throughout the event. Day one of the Summit featured Blueprint Roundtable discussions facilitated by leaders in each sector.

Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Federal Co-Chair Tim Thomas announced a \$500,000 grant to SOAR during the Summit. The funding will go to SOAR's program of work, including supporting the annual Summit through 2021.



More than
1,300
people

8
states

60
counties

More than
90+
exhibits

\$34m+
funding
announcements



“How appropriate is it for SOAR... The headwind we face in Eastern Kentucky will create the resistance for us to fly.”

Major Dan Rooney | 2019 SOAR Summit Keynote Speaker

Co-Starters Recap

“Before attending CO.STARTERS, we started with a concept for a brick and mortar, old-fashioned candy store in downtown Pikeville. Instead, the CO.STARTERS model inspired us to be creative and develop a scalable e-commerce model that I believe will help us reach our original goal and beyond. Six months in, we’ve sold products as a popup booth at festivals to test and refine our concept, and now we’ve launched an e-commerce website shipping our product to all 50 states. Without CO.STARTERS we never would have considered e-commerce.”

*Tim and Ruthie Caldwell | Mr. Tibbs Trading Company
2019 CO.STARTERS Participant*

SOAR launches six CO.STARTERS cohorts for startups and existing small businesses

SOAR partnered with CO.STARTERS to launch community cohorts in 2019 in Hazard, London, Morehead, Prestonsburg, Pikeville, and Whitesburg.

CO.STARTERS, an international learning platform based in Chattanooga, TN, is a nine-week, cohort-based program that equips aspiring entrepreneurs with the insights, relationships, and tools needed to turn business ideas into action and turn a passion into sustainable and thriving endeavors.

A unique part of the CO.STARTERS program is that it is facilitated by local entrepreneurs and caters to startups or existing small businesses for scalability.

Forty-five small businesses and startups participated in the six cohorts in 2019. SOAR plans to host cohorts in six other communities in 2020.





Tree of the Field was the winner of the first-ever Startup Appalachia Pitch Competition held on Thursday, September 5, 2019 at the Appalachian Center for the Arts in conjunction with the 2019 SOAR Summit. Shown are Robin Richmond Mason and her son, Andrew, and SOAR Director of Business and Innovation Ryan Jones.

SOAR hosts first-ever Startup Appalachia Pitch Competition

SOAR hosted its first-ever Startup Appalachia Pitch Competition on September 5, 2019 in conjunction with the 2019 SOAR Summit.

The event was sponsored by Peoples Bank, Invest 606, Toyota Tsusho, USDA Rural Development, and the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development's KY Innovation Office.

Thirty-five small businesses, entrepreneurs, and startups applied for ten spots to showcase at the competition.

Tree of the Field, a Berea, Ky.-based company that produces environmentally friendly products including the RediFlame Skeeterlog, a 100% natural insect repellent, won the first-place prize of \$5,000.

A-1 Implements and its Hemp Hawk were the second-place

winner receiving \$2,500. The Hemp Hawk is a device that attaches to a tractor to alleviate and control weeds in hemp fields.

Friends Drift Inn and Slope Masters tied for the third-place prize receiving \$500 each.

Friends Drift Inn, based in Pike County, is a farm and kitchen with a mission of "Growing a good life in Appalachia." Slope Masters, based in Floyd County, specializes in electrical services, welding, and fabrication. Their Slope Master Spider has captured the attention of municipalities and large landowners for its unique approach to slope mowing.

The Que, a unique streaming service intended for groups and communities, won the Crowd Favorite award and received \$500.



StartUp Socials allow entrepreneurs, startups, and those in small business opportunity to connect and collaborate

In 2019, SOAR placed a focus on building a community for entrepreneurs, startups, and small businesses to network and collaborate. Through the efforts of its Business and Innovation team, SOAR launched StartUp Socials throughout Appalachia Kentucky.

“It is important that we build a network within communities for entrepreneurs, startups, and small businesses to get together, get to know one another, and build relationships,”

said Jared Arnett, executive director of SOAR. “These events have led to synergies and collaborations between existing businesses and have provided a space for aspiring entrepreneurs to network and learn from those doing this work throughout Appalachia Kentucky.”

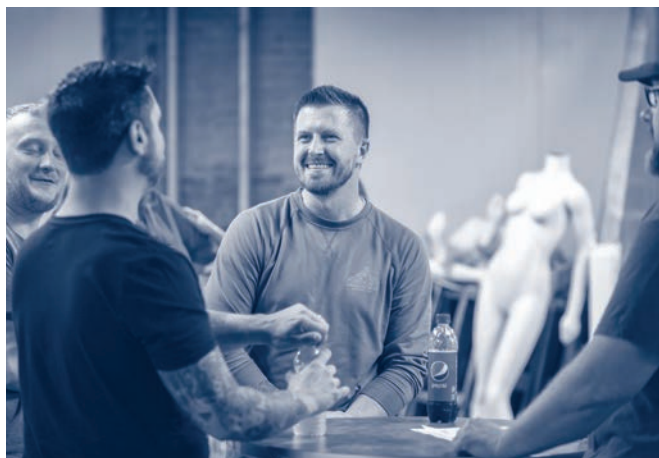
Want to host a StartUp Social in your community?
Email info@soar-ky.org.

STARTUP
SOCIAL

16
events

14
counties

More than
100+
attendees



“We still have communities that aren’t being served adequately with broadband. I believe we’ve got a duty to come together as a region and figure out: How do we continue to build out and expand broadband?”

Jared Arnett | Executive Director of SOAR



SOAR, Center for Rural Development bring leaders together at Broadband and Barbeque event

More than 80 community leaders representing 23 counties and three states gathered at the First Federal Center on the campus of Hazard Community and Technical College in June 2019 for the first-ever Broadband and Barbeque event presented by SOAR and the Center for Rural Development.

The convening was aimed to inform leaders on the power of connectivity in their respective communities and highlight the transformation taking place in communities across Appalachia Kentucky that have invested in connectivity infrastructure.

Conversations centered on how to improve access to high-speed affordable broadband and how to leverage that connectivity to grow local economies. In order to address numerous aspects of the topic, the event was divided into several sessions exploring remote work, business and startups, updates about KentuckyWired, broadband resources provided by the Center for Rural Development, and discussions with last-mile providers.





“Your market no longer has to be your storefront; it can be the world.”

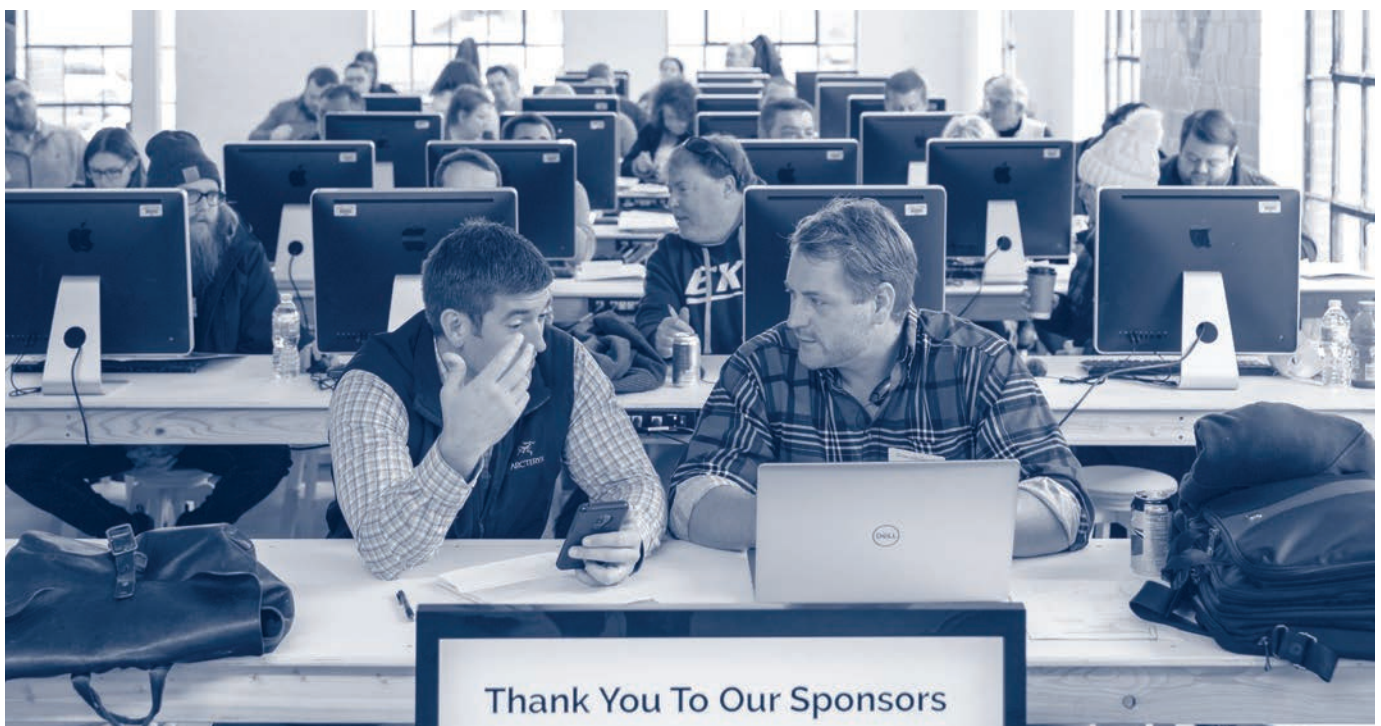
Jared Arnett | Executive Director of SOAR

SOAR partners to host Grow with Google event

SOAR became a Grow With Google partner in 2019 and held a Grow With Google event in Pikeville at BitSource in November, attracting more than 75 people from across eastern Kentucky.

The event was cohosted by Teleworks USA, the Southeast Kentucky Economic Development Corporation (SKED), and Be Boss Online.

Corissa Saint Laurent, a consultant from Portland, Oregon, facilitated the session. She is a contracted trainer with Google. Those in attendance learned about Google's suite of services including website and digital marketing tools.



BRIGHT Leadership, a success Building the next generation of leaders

“BRIGHT Kentucky has been such a learning and growing experience for me, both personally and professionally. I have been inspired in so many ways – inspired to do more for my community, inspired to collaborate more to improve the region, and inspired to work on my development as a person and a leader. Because of BRIGHT, great things are going to happen.”

Nicole Winkleman | BRIGHT Kentucky 2019 Graduate

BRIGHT

LEADERSHIP KENTUCKY

In 2019, SOAR provided financial support, along with the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and the Whitaker Foundation to create the BRIGHT Leadership program for emerging leaders across Appalachia Kentucky.

BRIGHT Kentucky was created to build the capacity of next-generation leaders (average age 20-40) to innovate, collaborate, and advance community and economic development.

The program spanned five months, offering intensive sessions throughout Kentucky's Appalachian region.

“Our Blueprint spans seven areas of focus and each area requires leadership,” said Jared Arnett, executive director of

SOAR. “We are proud to be a partner in BRIGHT Kentucky and look forward to watching how this program creates new synergies and collaborations among our best and brightest young leaders from across the region.”

Jeffery Justice, a business and innovation champion with SOAR, was a member of the inaugural class, which featured 48 participants from 28 counties in Appalachia Kentucky.



The inaugural class of BRIGHT Leadership Kentucky enjoyed the sites and sounds of the Red River Gorge during their opening session.



Members of the BRIGHT Leadership Kentucky program attended and were recognized at the 2019 SOAR Summit.

BRIGHT Leadership Class

Lucas Barnes | Estill County | Estill County Emergency Management Agency
 Will Bowling | Clay County | The Nature Conservancy
 Rachel Bowling | Carter County | Morehead State University Small Business Development Center
 Jessica Bray | Laurel County | Cumberland Valley Area Development District
 Ruthie Caldwell | Floyd County | Vision Granted
 Daniel Carmack | Laurel County | Sallie Davidson Realtors
 Kelli Chaney | Clinton County | United Cumberland Bank
 Corey Chesnut | Knox County | Forcht Bank
 Jerrod Childers | Powell County | Whitaker Bank
 Bobby Clue | Pulaski County | Somerset | Pulaski County Chamber of Commerce
 Amy Combs | Johnson County | Kentucky Addiction Centers
 Emily Conley | Wayne County | Barnes & Noble College
 Andrew Davis | Knox County | Hometown Bank
 Dee Dozier | Boyd County | American Electric Power
 Aaron Ellis | Greenup County | Pathways Inc.
 Larry Epling | Pike County | University of Pikeville
 Danielle Franklin Harmon | Johnson County | Highlands Health System
 Colby French | Harlan County | Dept. of Military Affairs Appalachian Challenge Academy
 JaKaye Garth | Pulaski County | Hampton Inn
 Cody Gibson | Pulaski County | Wright Medical Technologies
 Chase Hail | Whitley County | The Holler Creative
 Lindsay Hale | Clark County | Clark County Public Schools
 Julie Hendrix | Wolfe County | Hazard Community and Technical College System
 KaSandra Hensley | Rowan County | N.E. KY Area Health Education Center, St. Claire HealthCare
 Whitney Hogg | Letcher County | Childers Oil/Double Kwik
 Chandra Hunley | Floyd County | City of Pikeville, Appalachian Wireless Arena
 Chassidy Ison | Morgan County | Pathways Inc.
 Tyler Johnson | Madison County | Fahe
 Jeffery Justice | Pike County | Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR)
 Colby Kirk | Harlan County | One Harlan County
 Maggy Kriebel | Whitley County | Corbin Tourism and Convention Commission
 Derek Lewis | Laurel County | Commonwealth of Kentucky
 Brandy Martin | Whitley County | University of the Cumberlands
 Payton May | Pike County | BitSource
 Lauren McCoart | Perry County | WYMT
 Mindy Miller | Perry County | Housing Development Alliance, Inc.
 Ladetra Morgan | Clay County | Red Bird Mission
 T.J. Morrison | Boyd County | Boyd County Fiscal Court
 Rebecca Morton | Montgomery County | Maysville Community and Technical College
 John Nelson | Rowan County | Morehead State University
 Jeremy Noble | Lewis County | Maysville Community and Technical College
 Sally Oakes | Letcher County | Childers Oil/Double Kwik
 Donnie Osborn | Martin County | Kentucky Educational Development Corporation
 Ryan Osborne | Whitley County | University of the Cumberlands
 Kayla Parsons | Lawrence County | Abdication Recovery Care
 Laura Patrick | Greenup County | King's Daughters Health System
 Aaron Poynter | Russell County | Bennett's Carpets, Inc.
 Brittany Ratliff | Pike County | Jones & Walters PLLC
 Sierra Rice | Boyd County | Members Choice Credit Union
 Don Smith | Pike County | Pike County Commonwealth Attorney
 Nicole Winkleman | Elliott County | Kentucky Rural Healthcare Information Organization

SEED Symposium connects Appalachia Kentucky businesses to federal contract opportunities

Southeast Kentucky Economic Development Corporation (SKED), a Blueprint Partner of SOAR, held its third-annual Supplier Education and Economic Development (SEED) Symposium in October 2019 at the Morehead Conference Center.

The event attracted officials from 16 of the world's largest defense contractors and connected them with representatives from 23 Appalachia Kentucky businesses that have leveraged SKED's platform of services to provide services for such contractors. SKED has worked with more than 50 businesses from across the region in areas such as cyber security, bid preparation, compliance, and execution.

SKED has been able to provide services to such businesses through the support of an Appalachian Regional

Commission (ARC) POWER grant they received in early 2019.

During the event, Bob Schena, CEO and co-founder of Rajant Corporation, announced the company's intentions to purchase a building in downtown Morehead and to begin insourcing some of its overseas manufacturing to its Morehead facility.

Rajant, a Unity Partner of SOAR, has leveraged the expertise and support of Morehead State University's Space Science Center as part of its growth strategy in Morehead and around the globe.

To learn more about SKED's work assisting businesses to connect to federal defense contractors, visit www.southeastkentucky.com.



SOAR Principal Officer Congressman Hal Rogers visits with business and industry leaders at the 2019 SEED Symposium.



Representatives from 23 Appalachia Kentucky businesses participated in the 2019 SEED Symposium.

“Those curious about tapping into the economic development potential Eastern Kentucky has to offer should look first at the region's workforce. Beyond know-how, 100% of Rajant's Morehead staff has integrity, drive, and enthusiasm fueling their talent. For Rajant's purposes, we are fortifying continued technology innovations with engineering graduates from Morehead State University and hiring other support personnel to increase the production of goods and services for our global customers.”

Bob Schena | CEO and Co-Founder of Rajant Corporation

USA Drone Port holds first-ever UAS Con in Hazard

The USA Drone Port, a Blueprint Partner of SOAR, held the first-ever Unmanned Aerial Services Conference (UAS) on March 27-30, 2019 in Hazard.

United States Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao and SOAR Principal Officer Congressman Hal Rogers spoke at the event.

The conference included information on drone certifications, drone technology exhibitions, on-site demonstrations, panel discussions, search and rescue drone training, and industry-leading speakers. The USA Drone Port and Hazard Community and Technical College,

a Founding Partner of SOAR, have gained international acclaim for their work in training pilots and working with business and industry to incorporate UAS technology into their work.

USA Drone Port Executive Director Bart Massey was invited to attend the 2019 Paris Air Show as part of the Kentucky delegation to discuss the Drone Port and the advantages of training and building a workforce around UAS in Appalachia Kentucky.

The USA Drone Port will host the 2020 USA Drone Conference on April 13-16 in Hazard, KY.

NATIONAL UNMANNED ROBOTIC RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT CENTER



UAS-CON
UNMANNED AERIAL SYSTEMS • 2019 CONFERENCE

More than
450+
attendees

14
states
represented



usadroneport



@usadroneport

SOAR **IMPACT**

Communication

the impact

Digital
Websites
There is a Future.

275+
Stories Posted

70k
Visitors

50
States

70+
Countries

Digital Platforms

MORE THAN

2.2 Million
REACH

SOAR

115+
Stories Posted

37k
Visitors

50
States

50+
Countries

Twitter

2,670+
Followers

240k+
Reach

Constant Contact

800,000+
Reach

Facebook

7,690+
Followers

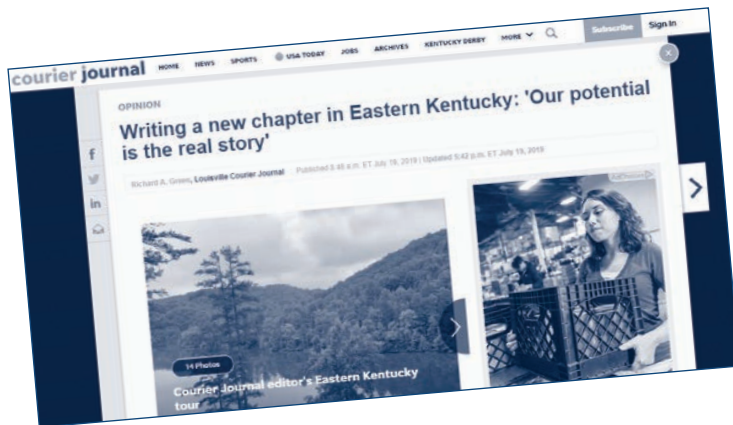
1,200,000+
Reach

**Speaking
Engagements**
83

Convenings Attended
248

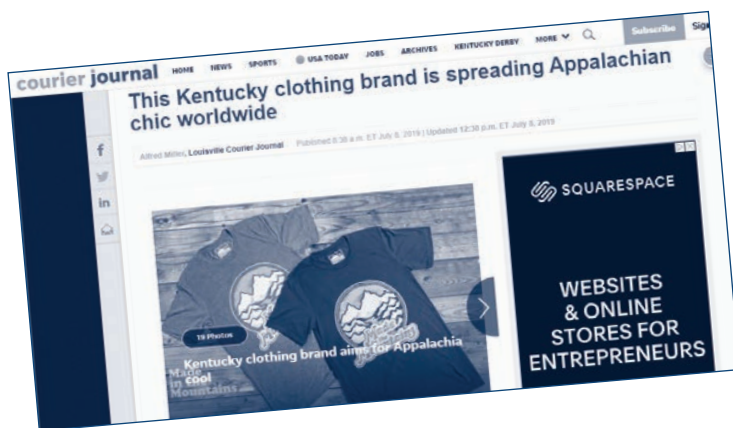
SOAR **IMPACT**

In the News

**WRITING A NEW CHAPTER IN EASTERN KENTUCKY: 'OUR POTENTIAL IS THE REAL STORY'**

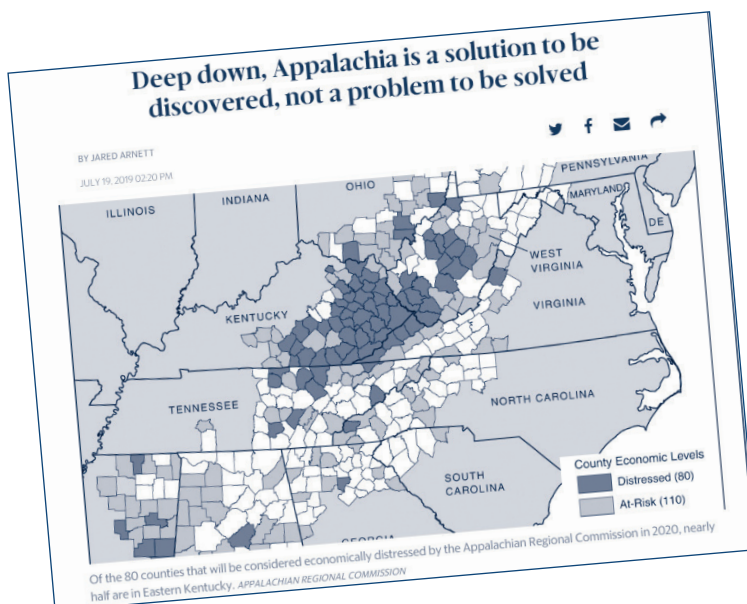
“...You're not going to find a better sausage and cheese omelet anywhere,” said Mary Parker, a server at the Down Home Grill in Louisa, just a stone's throw from the Big Sandy River. “And those biscuits and gravy are homemade. Good luck finding that back in Louisville.”

Louisville Courier Journal | July 2019

**KENTUCKY CLOTHING BRAND IS SPREADING APPALACHIAN CHIC WORLDWIDE**

“...Today, New Frontier Outfitters has a brick-and-mortar store in Morehead with outposts in Pagosa Springs, Colorado, and Cave Run Lake in Kentucky. The brothers say they regularly ship hats, shirts and other gear across the country and the world.”

Louisville Courier Journal | July 2019

**DEEP DOWN, APPALACHIA IS A SOLUTION TO BE DISCOVERED, NOT A PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED**

“...The future we are all working towards is not about any single person, organization, or even business sector. It is about our willingness to come together and to work together.”

Lexington Herald Leader | July 2019

SOAR**IMPACT**

Funding

REGIONAL GRANTS AWARDED

Blueprint aligned investments

BROADBAND	\$4,858,700
21ST CENTURY WORKFORCE	\$7,262,927
SMALL BUSINESS IN THE DIGITAL ECONOMY	\$867,582
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES	\$21,438,502
INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION	\$12,071,983
LOCAL FOODS	\$1,073,984
TOURISM	\$11,592,000
TOTAL	\$51,910,940

Source | Appalachian Regional Commission, Abandoned Mine Lands Pilot Program, and USDA



SOAR **IMPACT**

Blueprint.

A Plan for Our Future

SOAR's Blueprint for the Future of Appalachia is a plan that outlines seven goals that will drive the transformation of Appalachia Kentucky. The first goal is connectivity, and the other six goals are what we plan to do with it to transform the region. The Blueprint was created through the input of thousands of people across the region.

BROADBAND



WORKFORCE



BUSINESS



HEALTH



INDUSTRY



FOODS



TOURISM



Our team has worked tirelessly throughout Appalachia Kentucky in 2019, identifying opportunities to build capacity and bring transformative change. In 2019, we have been actively involved in more than 100 community and regional projects aligned with our Blueprint for the Future of Appalachia.



SOAR **IMPACT**

Broadband Connectivity



BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY

Increase the availability of affordable high-speed broadband, through fiber, to businesses and residents; and increase adoption rates throughout the SOAR region

“ This new broadband interstate bridges the digital gap to high-tech jobs and economic development opportunities for every single county in Kentucky. Now, we turn our attention to the last mile, by helping local leaders and providers take the next steps to extend the network on out into every community to expand access to your homes and businesses. ”

Congressman Hal Rogers | SOAR Principal Officer

Kentuckywired



KentuckyWired goes live across Appalachia Kentucky

KentuckyWired, an expansive 3,000-mile high-speed, high capacity fiber optic middle-mile network across the Commonwealth of Kentucky is live across Appalachia Kentucky. Officials flipped the switch making Rings 1A and 2 live at the 2019 SOAR Summit on September 6, 2019 at the Appalachian Wireless Arena in Pikeville.

The network has connected government offices, universities, community colleges, state parks, and other state entities. Internet Service Providers now have access to connect to

the network and bring faster and more reliable services to their customers.

In 2017, according to U.S. News & World Report, Kentucky ranked 48th in the nation for access to broadband. When the KentuckyWired project is complete, the Commonwealth will be the first state in the nation to build an open-access fiber optic cable network in every county.

The entire KentuckyWired project is projected to be completed in late 2020.



CLOSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Access for local ISPs

Construction of the KentuckyWired network was activated throughout most of Appalachia Kentucky in 2019. The Center for Rural Development is offering support to internet service providers (ISPs) with access points to extend reliable high-speed, high-capacity internet throughout the region.

The Center is collaborating with ISPs to discuss logistics for CenterLinks Access Nodes, or access ramps for providers to tap into the KentuckyWired's middle-mile network. These discussions are shaping plans to expand and improve broadband services throughout the region.

Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative

Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative (MRTC), a Blueprint Partner of SOAR, was recognized in 2019 with the Smart Rural Communities by the NTCA — The Rural Broadband Association, an organization representing more than 850 independent, community-based telecom companies across

the United States. Shayne Ison (right), general manager of MRTC, is shown with Collin Granger from Mapcom Systems accepting the 2019 Smart Rural Communities Award at the NTCA Fall Conference in Denver, Co. in September 2019.



Mountain Telephone

Center for Rural Development launches Technology Assistance program for Last-Mile infrastructure

The Center for Rural Development, a Blueprint Partner of SOAR, launched a Technology Assistance Program (TAP) to help communities begin asset mapping, perform feasibility studies, and conduct pre-engineering analysis of community fiber projects or other activities that will extend the reach of the KentuckyWired fiber infrastructure. The initiative is funded by a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission.

The Center is dedicated to assisting communities explore ways to become “fiber ready” in order to make reliable high-speed, high-capacity internet available to as many people as possible by fully leveraging the expansive network of KentuckyWired.

For more information on The Center's TAP, email broadbandinfo@centertech.com or call (606) 677-6000.

SOAR **IMPACT**

21st Century Workforce



21st Century Workforce — Develop our regional workforce to be competitive in the digital economy and other emerging industries



Here's more than 2,600 reasons why Teleworks USA continues to build relationships with national and global companies to tap into Appalachia Kentucky's incredible workforce

Teleworks USA, an initiative of the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program, Inc. (EKCEP), has leveraged the connectivity throughout eastern Kentucky with the growing need of employers to find highly skilled remote workers to create more than 2,600 jobs since 2015.

The program has nine hubs located in Clay, Harlan, Jackson, Lawrence, Lee, Leslie, Owsley, Perry, and Pike counties. In 2019, Teleworks USA created more than 630 jobs with its national and global partner companies in eastern Kentucky and an estimated \$14.5 million in new wages.

In a first for the program, Teleworks USA partnered with Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) to open a Digital Careers Center on its Manchester campus in 2019. The new center offers a fully equipped workshop training space for prospective teleworkers to complete Teleworks USA's self-paced customer service and digital literacy workshops.

As increased internet and broadband connectivity is spreading in Clay County through the implementation of Kentucky Wired and internet service providers such as Peoples Rural Telephone Cooperative (PRTC), Teleworks USA is utilizing the space for training and outreach efforts. Since opening in the Fall of 2019, the center has placed 13 people in remote work jobs building on the success of 34 that had been placed in prior outreach efforts, making an average of \$11 to \$15 an hour.

Other 2019 accomplishments included:

Continued strengthening of partnerships with national and

global companies such as Concentrix, Kelly Connect, Support.com, Nimble Connect, and others.

Kelly Connect held in-person interviews throughout the region for tech support positions paying between \$12 to \$14 an hour with a raise to \$13 to \$15 after 90 days.

Concentrix, Teleworks USA's longest running employer partner, hired people throughout 2019 for various positions in retail customer service, tech support, and tax prep support. In the Winter 2019, Teleworks USA hosted a week-long series of job offer session workshops, where over 320 were offered the job and 136 had been processed – with more to come — in early 2020.

Nimble Connect is a small, family-owned remote-work



company based in California that does “thank you” calling to non-profit and charity donors and also offers prayer to those by request. They often come to Teleworks USA seeking a limited number of callers to fill their ambassador positions that could reach up to \$15 an hour. This partnership is valuable in that it is a unique opportunity for a region that is doing things that have never been done before. Teleworks USA was introduced to Nimble Connect by FlexJobs – a partnership in and of itself that initially started when SOAR Executive

Director Jared Arnett and EKCEP Director of Agency Expansion and Teleworks USA Michael Cornett, attended the 2017 TRaD Workforce Summit in Washington, D.C.

Sector-led partnerships: Teleworks USA held a Medical Coding training specifically for those seeking to work remotely in the field. This was a collaboration between EKCEP, Hazard Community and Technical College and Career Step. They also held a Cybersecurity training in partnership with EKCEP, 418 Intelligence, and Cover 6 Solutions.

Partnerships make it possible

TELEWORKSUSA

Telework USA's Hub model is one built on community partnerships. The success of the program and the creation of more than 2,600 jobs is a direct result of communities, leaders, and partners thinking outside of the box.

Here's a glimpse of the partners working directly with Teleworks USA:

HARLAN COUNTY 2019 JOBS | 41 JOBS

2019 Economic Impact
\$938,080

Jobs Since Opening in May 2016 | 283 Jobs
Partners | Harlan County Fiscal Court, Eastern Telephone and Technologies, and the Appalachian Regional Commission.

JACKSON COUNTY 2019 JOBS | 94 JOBS

2019 Economic Impact
\$2,104,960

Jobs Since Opening in January 2015 | 657 Jobs
Partners | Jackson County Fiscal Court, Peoples Rural Telephone Cooperative, Appalachian Regional Commission, and Jackson County / McKee Industrial Development Authority

LAWRENCE COUNTY 2019 JOBS | 59 JOBS

2019 Economic Impact
\$1,304,160

Jobs Since Opening September 2017 | 143 Jobs
Partners | Lawrence County Fiscal Court, Northeast Kentucky Community Action, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture Rural Development, and Kentucky Power.

LEE COUNTY 2019 JOBS | 74 JOBS

2019 Economic Impact
\$1,601,600

Jobs Since Opening in March 2016 | 267 Jobs
Partners | City of Beattyville, Lee County Fiscal Court, and Appalachian Regional Commission

LESLIE COUNTY 2019 JOBS | 63 JOBS

2019 Economic Impact
\$1,441,440

Jobs Since Opening in May 2017 | 155 Jobs
Partners | Leslie County Fiscal Court, City of Hyden, Hazard Community and Technical College, the Appalachian Regional Commission, and Eastern Telephone and Technologies.

OWSLEY COUNTY 2019 JOBS | 73 JOBS

2019 Economic Impact
\$1,555,840

Jobs Since Opening in July 2016 | 301 Jobs
Partners | Owsley County Action Team, Jackson Energy, Owsley County Fiscal Court, Shaping Our Appalachian Region, Inc. (SOAR), U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Peoples Rural Telephone Cooperative.

PERRY COUNTY 2019 JOBS | 78 JOBS

2019 Economic Impact
\$1,578,720

Jobs Since Opening in May 2016 | 445 jobs
Partners | Kentucky Career Center JobSight (Hazard) and LKLP Community Action Council.

PIKE COUNTY 2019 JOBS | 47 JOBS

2019 Economic Impact
\$1,075,360

Jobs Since Opening in December 2016 | 230 Jobs
Partners | Pike County Fiscal Court, the Appalachian Regional Commission and Eastern Telephone and Technologies.

CLAY COUNTY 2019 JOBS | 13 JOBS

2019 Economic Impact
TBD

Jobs Since Opening in October 2019 | 13 Jobs
Partners | Eastern Kentucky University and Peoples Rural Telephone Cooperative.

Outreach Efforts | 2019 Jobs = 95 Jobs | Jobs Since October 2018 = 110

Partners | Made possible by a grant through United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) to service counties that did not have a Hub presence which included Carter, Elliott, Menifee, Morgan, Wolfe, Johnson, Magoffin, Clay, and Knox counties.

TOTAL | 630+ JOBS IN 2019 | \$13,773,760+ IN ANNUAL WAGES

Digital Careers Now creates more than 200 jobs through regional hubs



In 2017, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) awarded a \$3.5 million grant to create Digital Careers Now (DCN), a consortium made up of Big Sandy Community and Technical College, Hazard Community and Technical College, Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College, Shaping Our Appalachian Region, Inc. (SOAR), and the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program, Inc. (EKCEP). The program provides services to greater connect people and businesses to opportunities in the digital economy.

In 2019, the program served 325 people and placed 205 of those into jobs, including more than 190 jobs through a collaboration with General Dynamics Information Technology (GDIT). In Fall 2019, GDIT announced an expansion to a DCN Hub located on the Mayo Campus of Big Sandy Community and Technical College. They have offered employment to 61 people with plans to launch in early 2020. Since 2018, GDIT has hired more than 140 people at Hub locations on the Hazard campus of Hazard Community and Technical College and the Cumberland campus of Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College in addition to the job offers made at the Mayo campus of Big Sandy Community and Technical College.

Other companies served by DCN in 2019 included:

- ProSphere | Information Technology
- Campbell's Plumbing and Excavating | Advanced Manufacturing
- VIP Kid | Remote Online Teachers
- Pikeville Medical Center | Medical Coding

COLLABORATIONWORKS

140+ Jobs

Cumberland | Hazard | Paintsville

Annual Wages

\$4.3 million

GENERAL DYNAMICS



Members of the Digital Careers NOW and General Dynamics team showcased at the 2019 SOAR Summit.



Staff from Digital Careers NOW and General Dynamics held job fairs across the region in 2019 to fill openings at hubs in Cumberland, Hazard, and Paintsville.



The success of Digital Careers NOW hubs in Cumberland and Hazard paved the way for an expansion into Paintsville in 2019 with General Dynamics.

"Appalachia is not a problem to be solved, it is a solution to be discovered."

*Jeff Whitehead
Executive Director of EKCEP*



Pikeville Medical Center, BSCTC partnering to expand nursing programs

Pikeville Medical Center (PMC), a Presenting Partner of SOAR, and Big Sandy Community and Technical College announced a collaboration at the 2019 SOAR Summit to expand the college's associate degree nursing program to better meet the demands of the medical center's growth.

The two entities have entered into a Memorandum of Agreement on the collaboration and BSCTC will file an application to the Kentucky Board of Nursing to expand its nursing program. PMC also collaborated with the college, the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program, Inc. (EKCEP) and the Kentucky Cabinet for Education and Workforce Development to participate in the K-TECH program to secure funding to expand exposure to allied health fields within area high schools.

The college plans to open its expanded nursing program in August 2020.

Pikeville Medical Center collaborates to create jobs and career pathways

Pikeville Medical Center (PMC), a Presenting Partner of SOAR, announced collaborative partnerships in 2019 with the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program, Inc. (EKCEP), Kentucky SkillsU, Big Sandy Community and Technical College, Digital Careers Now, and the Kentucky Education and Workforce Cabinet to create new jobs and career pathways for the people of Appalachia Kentucky.

While most healthcare facilities outsource billing and coding, PMC announced its plans to bring these services back to the hospital. Partnering with Digital Careers Now, 33 people were able to train, earn a national certification, and be employed by PMC through this partnership. The hospital also amended its GED and high school diploma policy and partnered with EKCEP and Kentucky SkillsU to assist employees on enrolling in adult education courses to obtain their GED while working for the hospital.

PMC will offer additional training through its collaborative partners in 2020.



Galen College of Nursing continues to grow

In 2017, the Galen College of Nursing opened in Hazard as part of a collaboration with Appalachian Regional Healthcare (ARH), a Cornerstone Partner of SOAR, to increase the number of associate degree nursing graduates throughout Appalachia Kentucky.

Galen College, a Blueprint Partner of SOAR, increased its capacity to 200 students annually through a cohort-based program. New cohorts begin each week, and the college had 89 graduates in 2019 and a 95% pass rate on the NCLEX (National Council of State Boards of Nursing) exam. The college has also placed 100% of its graduates into employment opportunities.

Galen College has petitioned the Kentucky Board of Nursing to increase its annual enrollment to 250 students.

“As a Talent Pipeline Management champion, it has been rewarding to witness the collaboration between industry and training. The pipeline tool allowed us to get actual figures of the jobs within the healthcare sector and begin to use that data to form a collaborative to fill the jobs that are vacant across the healthcare sector in Eastern Kentucky.”

Joyce Wilcox | Talent Pipeline Management Champion
EKCEP Industry Liaison

Collaborative addressing employment needs of healthcare providers across Appalachia Kentucky

SOAR Principal Officer Congressman Hal Rogers hosted a roundtable of healthcare leaders from across Appalachia Kentucky in the Fall of 2018 at Morehead State University. The message was clear: Healthcare providers across the region have jobs to fill now and in the years to come.

Congressman Rogers tasked SOAR to bring providers and training partners together to discuss better ways to work with one another to address the shortage of healthcare professionals in the region. This led to the formation of the HERE (Healthcare Education Reimagined Eastern Kentucky), a partnership between SOAR, the Kentucky Chamber Workforce Center, the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program, Inc. (EKCEP).

The goals of the collaborative are to reduce the shortages of healthcare professionals by increasing awareness of available resources and invest in programming and strategies that will address such shortages.

Through the help of the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation Talent Pipeline Management Initiative (TPM), Kentucky Chamber Workforce Center, HERE was able to quantify the number of registered nurses needed by 2021 (730). By using this data, HERE and its partners began to survey healthcare providers and training providers to identify challenges and opportunities to collaborate. The TPM initiative is a demand-driven, employer-driven approach to close the gap that builds pipelines of talent aligned to dynamic business needs.

The collaborative has helped to uncover best practices among participating providers. It has also allowed for more consistent communication between the provider and training

institutions.

While registered nurses are the most pressing need for healthcare providers, the collaborative has uncovered other employment opportunities in such areas as: Licensed Practical Nurse, Certified Nursing Assistant, Certified Medical Assistant, Patient Technicians, Respiratory Therapist, Lab Technicians, Emergency Medical Technicians, Paramedics, Radiological Technicians, and Limited Medical Radiography.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

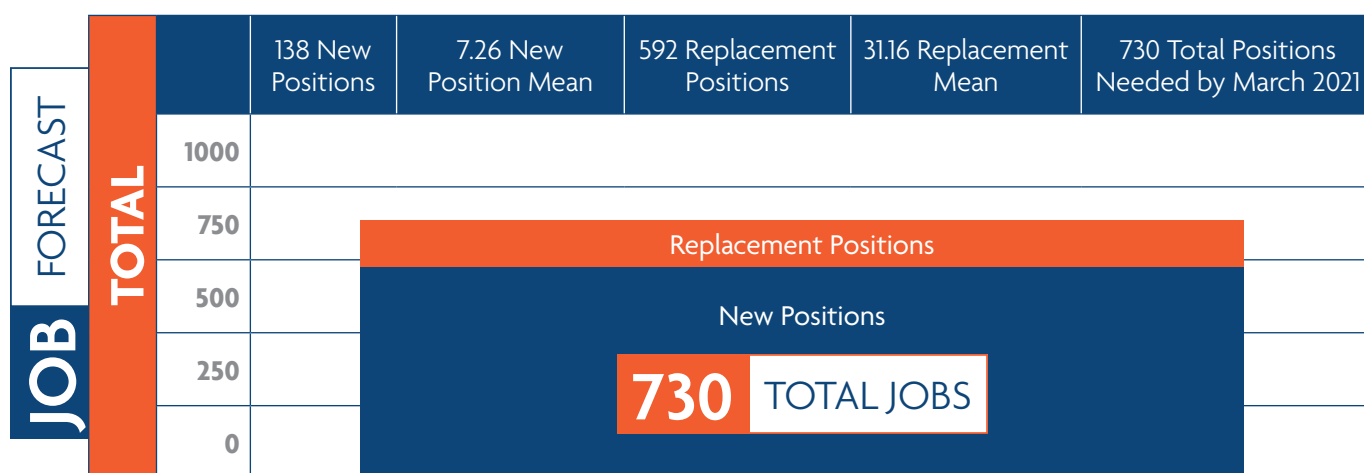
- SOAR
- EKCEP
- Kentucky Chamber Workforce Center

COLLABORATIVE MEMBERS

- Appalachian Regional Healthcare
- Juniper Health
- Rockcastle Regional Hospital and Respiratory Care Center
- Mountain Comprehensive Health Corporation
- Pikeville Medical Center
- Primary Care Centers of Eastern Kentucky
- Mountain Manor

TRAINING PROVIDERS

- University of Pikeville
- Hazard Community and Technical College
- Big Sandy Community and Technical College
- Galen College of Nursing
- Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College



SOAR **IMPACT**

Small Business in the Digital Economy



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

Invest 606

Through the support of the University of the Cumberlands, the James Graham Foundation, and the Foundation for Appalachia Kentucky, Invest 606 was launched in 2019.

The program is being led by Dr. Geoff Marietta and its mission is to catalyze business growth in the 606 by connecting entrepreneurs with the resources they need to succeed today and grow tomorrow. Marietta is an entrepreneur-in-residence at the University of the Cumberlands, which also serves as the home office of Invest 606.

Invest 606, a Blueprint Partner of SOAR, launched a pitch competition in 2019. The program is unique in that the 12 finalists will pitch for a chance to win a \$10,000 grand prize in 2020, but each finalist completed individualized and flexible training plan in 2019. They plan to participate in a Demo Day early in 2020 with the pitch competition set for April 2020 in Williamsburg, Ky.

The 12 finalists employ an estimated 60 people, and two-thirds of the businesses are owned by women.

The finalist are:

- City Perk Coffeehouse | Jennifer Kopecky
- Class Guard ReadShield | Chris McNamee
- Elevate Health and Fitness | Susannah Zawko
- Fact of Nature | Kenny Miles
- Inquiry Technologies | Scott Stuckey
- Ky Lavender | Allison Horseman and Mary May
- KYARTRAT | Stef Ratliff
- Moonlight Meat Shop | Anne Bays
- Oak Hill Gardens | Josh Samples
- Old Homeplace Farm | Maggie and Will Bowling
- Sassy TRASH | April and Paul Collins
- Sprinkles of Hope | Meagan Brannon



Translate. Convene. Educate. Impact.

We achieve our mission by translating research insights into practical frameworks, convening stakeholders focused on Innovation-Driven enterprises, and educating regional leaders through team-based interaction to achieve economic and social progress.

Translate research and expertise into practical frameworks, approaches and actions with widespread global application.

Convene stakeholders (corporate, risk capital, entrepreneur, university and government) from ecosystems around the world to build a community for collaboration and learning.

Educate regional innovation ecosystem leaders through team-based learning to facilitate meaningful economic and social outcomes.

Impact regions through the development of new programmatic and policy interventions that build on strengths and support weaknesses to support IDEs.

SOAR innovation



446 Businesses Identified

131 Incentives Completed

Incentives include business planning, market support, reaching new markets, and tech development.

BUSINESS AND INNOVATION TEAM

Ryan Jones | Director of SOAR Innovation | Pikeville

Jeffery Justice | Business and Innovation Champion | Pikeville/Paintsville

Colby Fugate | Business and Innovation Champion | Hazard

Tal Jones | Business and Innovation Champion | London

Sabrina McWhorter | Business and Innovation Champion | Ashland/Morehead

SOAR playing a key role in MIT REAP

Kentucky became the first United States cohort of the internationally-recognized Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) REAP (Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program) in 2019, and SOAR has played a key role in the project identifying best practices to incorporate into the small business and startup community throughout Appalachia Kentucky.

MIT REAP cohorts participate in four action-based learning cycles over a two-year period, including lectures and discussions, case study analysis, ecosystem engagement tours, programmatic deep dives, group report-outs, and preparation for action activities.

SOAR is working closely with the Kentucky cohort to connect the MIT REAP work to the Blueprint for the Future of Appalachia and the work being done through its Business and

Innovation team.

"This experience is being used to help us build capacity within our Blueprint goal of Small Business in the Digital Economy," said Jared Arnett, executive director of SOAR. "Through this experience, we have been able to connect with communities across the globe that are leveraging innovation and connectivity in a variety of ways. This has presented so many opportunities for us to dream bigger and reach higher to bring new opportunities throughout the region. We are so grateful to be a part of such a collaborative effort with MIT."

Arnett and Luke Ramsay, of the University of Kentucky's Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky (CEDIK) and Rusty Justice, co-founder of Bit Source, represent Appalachia Kentucky in the cohort. The cohort will complete the MIT REAP program in 2020.

SOAR partners with KY Innovation to assist innovation-driven small businesses, startups, and entrepreneurs

SOAR continued its work assisting innovation-driven and innovation-capable small businesses, startups, and entrepreneurs in 2019. This is made possible through a collaboration with the Cabinet for Economic Development's KY Innovation Office.

Business and Innovation Champions are deployed in Ashland/

Morehead, Hazard, London, and Pikeville/Paintsville with a director based in Pikeville. Champions work proactively throughout the region to identify and build relationships with existing small businesses that have the desire and capacity to scale-up utilizing technology through methods of e-commerce, export, etc.

SOAR innovation IN *action*



ANNIE'S FRUGAL FINERY | WHITESBURG

Annie's Frugal Finery is a high-end consignment store that occupies a 5,000 square-foot space in downtown Whitesburg in Letcher County. The company has had success selling products on social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook. SOAR's Business and Innovation team assisted owner Debbie Campbell with finding affordable health insurance for her employees. They also connected her with SOAR Blueprint Partner MACED (Mountain Association for Community Economic Development) to learn more about grant funding to establish a website for sales and better manage inventory.



HEMP HAWK | MOREHEAD

A-1 Implements' Hemp Hawk is an innovative weeding device that can accompany tractors to weed fields with maximum efficiency and effectiveness. The Hemp Hawk exploded on the scene in 2019 as interest in hemp grew across the country. Through the help of SOAR's Business and Innovation team, A-1 partnered with 4C Innovations in Morehead to begin mass production of the product, and officials from A-1 Implements continue to market the product across the country at expos and other gatherings of agriculture leaders. A-1 Implements won second place in the first-ever Startup Appalachia Pitch Competition at the 2019 SOAR Summit and is currently working with SOAR to create a website to market their line of products.



TREE OF THE FIELD | BEREA

Robin Richmond Mason is the founder of Tree of the Field, the creators of environmentally friendly products including the RediFlame Skeeterlog, a 100% natural insect repellent. This product uses eight natural oils and is the equivalent of liquid insecticide and sells their products as part of a Chiminea kit. In 2019, Tree of the Field pitched their products successfully to the Wal-Mart Foundation, and is currently being sold on Amazon and Wayfair and retailers such as Whole Foods, the Berea Artisan Center, W.D. Bryant & Son Hardware Store, and Begley's General Store. SOAR's Business and Innovation team is working with Tree of the Field to enhance their digital marketing strategy through The Holler Creative and is aiding in research and development of potential new products.



SLOPE MASTERS | MARTIN

From mining to mowing. That's a philosophy that is working for Slope Masters Co-Founders C.W. Porter and Mark Halbert. They turned their experience in metal fabrication and electrical technology in the mining industry into a remote-control lawnmower that is beginning to garner national attention. SOAR's Business and Innovation team is working with Porter and Halbert to acquire patents for the technology and a strategy to effectively manufacture, market, and sell the product.



MR. TIBBS TRADING COMPANY | PIKEVILLE

Mr. Tibbs Trading Company initially planned to build a storefront candy store in downtown Pikeville. After entrepreneurs Tim and Ruthie Caldwell participated in a nine-week CO.STARTERS cohort sponsored by SOAR, they turned the idea of sweet treats and thoughtful stories behind global delicacies into an e-commerce and innovation-led business. SOAR's Business and Innovation team referred Tim and Ruthie to the Kentucky Small Business Development Center (SBDC) for assistance in compiling a business plan and guidance on potential funding streams. Mr. Tibbs Trading Company is now online and SOAR's Business and Innovation team is working to provide strategic consulting and advising as they seek additional funding.



DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA?

CONNECT WITH US AT WWW.SOARINNOVATION.TECH

SOAR **IMPACT**

Healthy Communities



Healthy Communities — To reduce the physical and economic impact of obesity, diabetes, and substance use disorder

“Healthy economies are built by healthy communities, and the collaboration of partners working throughout the region to combat substance use disorder are making a difference. Decades ago, we were ground zero for the epidemic. Today, we are ground zero for effective strategies to promote recovery.”

Jared Arnett | Executive Director of SOAR

Overdose mortality rates decreasing in EKY

DID YOU KNOW? Several counties in Appalachia Kentucky have seen declines in drug overdose mortality rates over the past decade, even as overdose rates have risen in the state of Kentucky as a whole, as well as in the Appalachian regions of neighboring states such as Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West

Virginia.

Between 2008-2012 and 2013-2017, of the 10 counties with the greatest decline in drug overdose mortality, 8 of them are in Eastern Kentucky. Of the top 20 counties, 14 are in Appalachia Kentucky.

County	State	Drug Overdose Mortality Rate (2013-2017) [^]	Decline in Drug Overdose Mortality Rate between 2013-2017 and 2008-2012
Clay County	KY	29.5	-52.2
Johnson County	KY	38.8	-49.7
Floyd County	KY	73.8	-34
Magoffin County	KY	35.6*	-32.8
Breathitt County	KY	46.4	-32
Bath County	KY	44.2*	-30.7
Powell County	KY	70.1	-30.4
Letcher County	KY	46.3	-28.8

[^]Age-adjusted drug overdose mortality rate per 100,000 for population age 15-64

*Crude death rate

Funding: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) to the NORC Walsh Center for Rural Health Analysis and the UK Center of Excellence in Rural Health.

Second Chance Auto | Changing lives by changing tires

In December 2018, Addiction Recovery Care (ARC), a Cornerstone Partner of SOAR, rolled out an automotive service company for its employees. The idea was intended to help service the fleet of vehicles for the company's facilities throughout Appalachia Kentucky.

A month later, Second Chance Auto opened to the general public.

And more than 3,500 customers later, the business is thriving, but more importantly, it is sending a resounding message that recovery is real.

"We are building relationships with the communities we serve, and that is what we intended to do from day one," said Jon Storms, service manager for Second Chance Auto. "Customers are people you may have one encounter with, but those you build relationships with are the ones who will always turn to you when they need something."

Second Chance Auto aligns with ARC's nationally-recognized Crisis to Career model. The full-service automotive repair and body shop has 10 full-time employees and the majority of the employees are in recovery.

"There's a lot of talk about second chance employment, and those are important conversations that need to be taking place," said Tim Robinson, founder and CEO of ARC. "As a national leader in treatment and workforce training, we believe that Second Chance Auto is a model for others to follow. We are providing a valuable service to our communities, but we are also providing hope for those walking in recovery. They are not only finding gainful employment and purpose, but they are also a part of a recovery community that we are building within our organization."

To learn more, visit www.secondchanceautocare.com.



From Crisis to Career: Peer Support Specialist Academy

Addiction Recovery Care (ARC), a Cornerstone Partner of SOAR, is the state's largest training provider for Peer Support Specialists. Since May 2017, the organization, which is based in Louisa, KY and has outpatient and inpatient facilities across Appalachia Kentucky, has trained 156 Peer Support Specialists.

A Peer Support Specialist is a licensed practitioner that has become a valuable component to combating substance use disorder throughout the region. They complete 30 hours of training and must complete and pass a written and oral test in addition to other continuing education requirements.

However, ARC's Peer Support Specialist Academy is much different. ARC Founder and Chief Executive Officer Tim Robinson has leveraged this program to provide more intensive and meaningful services to his clients. He's also used it to move some of his former clients from crisis to career by

placing them on staff at ARC.

"It is powerful when a Peer Support Specialist can intervene in the moments after someone in addiction begins to contemplate recovery," he said. "When a Peer Support Specialist walks into a room, they can immediately relate to the fear, the doubt, and the many other challenges facing not only the person battling addiction, but also their family and other loved ones."

The Peer Support Specialist Academy is a collaboration between ARC, SOAR, the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program, Inc. (EKCEP), and Sullivan University. As part of the Peer Support Specialist training, those in the program earn college credit and many continue their education and re-enter the workforce.



Joe Waugh

“The academy gave me more than a career... It gave me a purpose. I filed taxes for the first time last year, and I put up my first Christmas tree. I am now a taxpayer, a son, a father, and an employee. The academy gave me the motivation to go on to be a college student making straight A's. The Peer Support Academy saved my life.”

Joe Waugh, Peer Support Academy Student



75

2019
graduates

CRISIS TO CAREER

PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST ACADEMY

Since starting in May 2017
156 graduates | 111 employed

49

gainfully
employed



150
Jobs



PMC announces plans to construct children's hospital, Appalachia Kentucky's first Children's Hospital

Pikeville Medical Center (PMC), a Presenting Partner of SOAR, announced plans in 2019 to construct Appalachia Kentucky's first Children's Hospital.

The project is filling the regional healthcare gap by creating a community healthcare cluster while strengthening the economy of the region.

The more than 13,000 square-foot facility will be on the hospital's main campus and will create an estimated 50 jobs and retain over 100 other pediatric and non-medical staff. The project will represent a more than \$6 million investment to the region.

PMC was the recipient of a \$4.78 million grant from the Abandoned Mine Lands Pilot program. The medical center also received an additional \$1.5 million from an Appalachian Regional Commission POWER grant to assist in equipping the Children's Hospital.

"This investment in eastern Kentucky will help us reach out beyond the walls of the hospital to broaden the scope and deepen the value of what we can provide to the region's youth," said PMC CEO Donovan Blackburn.

The Children's Hospital is projected to open in 2020.



\$7 M
Investment



Addiction Is Losing: Operation UNITE a driving force of collaboration to combat SUD on all fronts

Unlawful Narcotics Investigations, Treatment and Education (Operation UNITE) deploys a three-pronged, comprehensive approach deemed necessary to combating substance abuse in Kentucky.

“Through collaboration with partners such as SOAR, UNITE is creating hope and changing the culture surrounding substance use issues in southern and eastern Kentucky,” said Nancy Hale, UNITE president and CEO. “We are starting to see data that indicates UNITE’s prevention initiatives focused on reducing the demand for and availability of drugs, as well as providing treatment assistance for those with substance use disorders, are creating a brighter future for residents of our region.”

Since its inception in 2013, more than 278,000 youth have participated in prevention programs that seek to empower them to remain free from alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and other drugs and to become leaders within their schools and communities.

The UNITE Rural Health Opioid Program (RHOP) began in January 2019 with the goal of reducing morbidity and mortality related to opioid use disorders. This Kentucky River Region initiative provides treatment vouchers as well as personalized case management for those in treatment to assist with resources during transition and aftercare, including transportation services.

In 2019, UNITE Treatment Vouchers valued at \$930,000 enabled 186 individuals enter a residential, long-term treatment

program for a substance use disorder. Staff at the KY HELP Statewide Call Center, operated by UNITE, responded to an average of 308 calls each month from individuals and families seeking resources and support.

UNITE Community Coalitions continue to implement education and treatment initiatives while supporting the investigative component in each of the 32 counties served by UNITE.

In addition to drug investigations at all levels, UNITE detectives are engaged with youth prevention initiatives, community education programs, and support treatment and recovery initiatives. This includes the Medication Dropbox initiative that collected 7,255 pounds (3.62 tons) of unused or outdated prescription and over-the-counter drugs this past year – 27.31 percent of Kentucky’s total.

More than 3,500 people – representing all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, four Canadian provinces, Iceland, Turkey and the United Kingdom – attended the eighth annual Rx Drug Abuse & Heroin Summit in April. UNITE serves as Educational Advisor for the Summit, the largest collaboration of professionals and advocates who have been impacted by prescription opioid abuse/diversion and heroin use.

To learn more about Operation UNITE’s initiatives, please visit OperationUNITE.org.

BY THE NUMBERS

Operation UNITE’s impact in 2019

- **10,215** students were members of **146** school-based UNITE Clubs in **25** counties.
- **7,694** students participated in “On The Move!” – a one-of-a-kind mobile prevention initiative utilizing interactive components related to impairment and other physical effects caused by making poor choices from using alcohol or other drugs.
- **195** middle school-aged youth attended Camp UNITE, a week-long residential drug awareness leadership/adventure program at the University of the Cumberlands.
- **954** youth from **25** counties participated in Shoot Hoops Not Drugs basketball camps, with **277** parents/guardians attending a drug awareness program focused on vaping. That program is now being offered to middle and high school students.

SOAR **IMPACT**

Industrial Recruitment



Industrial Development — Increase the amount of industrial employment including, manufacturing, natural resources, processing, and distribution

Appalachia Kentucky: America's High-Tech Ag Capitol

AppHarvest, which is building some of America's largest controlled-environment agriculture facilities across Appalachia, had a banner year in 2019. The company aims to dramatically expand access to fresh fruits and vegetables with the goal of increasing the number of Americans who eat enough of each. That's just one in 10 currently, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Supported by SOAR since its founding, AppHarvest, a Grassroots Partner of SOAR, started construction on an expansive 60-acre indoor farm that will open in the latter half of 2020 in Morehead, Ky. The company's "Farming Now" philosophy centers on the idea that the future of farming is not decades away but rather right now because of technology that already exists to grow significantly more using far fewer resources.

AppHarvest's facilities utilize technology perfected in the Netherlands, which is the world's second-largest agricultural exporter behind the United States, despite a land mass roughly the equivalent of Eastern Kentucky. With its array of partners, AppHarvest has also developed cutting-edge technology that includes a water system supported entirely by rainwater collected on site, as well as a hybrid lighting system that will

significantly increase harvests while also reducing natural gas usage in colder months.

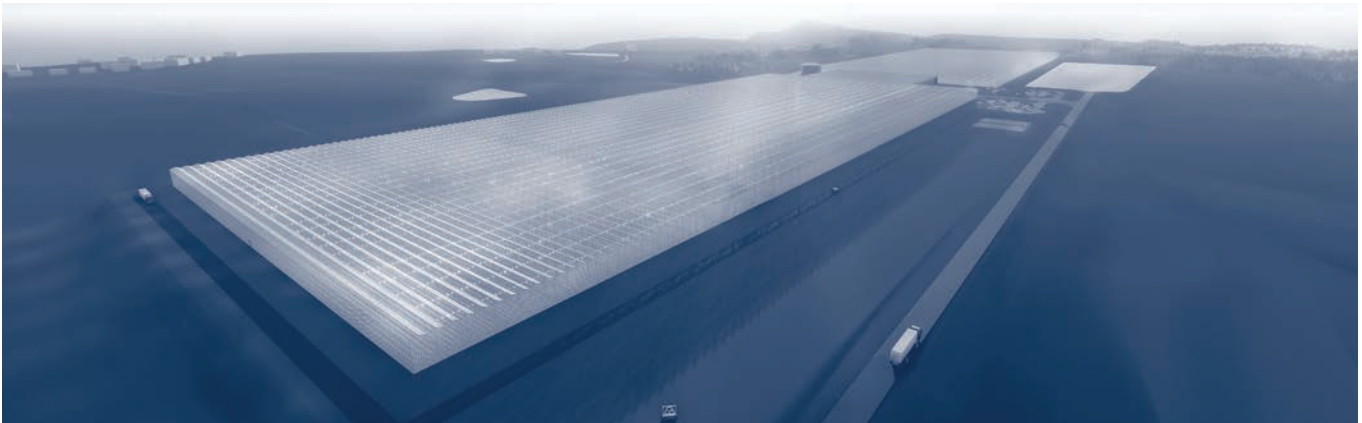
Among the company's 2019 accomplishments:

CONSTRUCTION QUICKENS | The company had more than one-third of its 600 containers of construction materials on its farm site. Construction crews started on the site in spring, leveling and grading around 625,000 cubic yards of land to accommodate the facility.

CONTAINER FARM EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM EXPANDS | Before starting construction, AppHarvest spent \$150,000 to establish a high-tech container farm educational program at Pike County's Shelby Valley High School. The program completed its first full year in 2019 with students growing thousands of pounds of veggies distributed to those in need. AppHarvest also provided the program's curriculum to additional high schools throughout the region, helping bring the excitement of AgTech and entrepreneurship to hundreds more students.

UNPRECEDENTED INVESTMENT | The company announced in May 2019 it had raised more than \$100 million in just 15 months for the project. Investors include:

Revolution's Rise of the Rest Seed Fund, which is led by AOL



Co-Founder Steve Case.

ValueAct Capital's ValueAct Spring Fund. Founder Jeffrey W. Ubben has served as a director of Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, Twenty-First Century Fox, and Sara Lee.

Equilibrium, which created the first fund for controlled-environment agriculture projects.

MEDIA INTEREST AND ACCOLADES | The company's work attracted coverage by major media outlets, including The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, CNBC and Fast Company. Worldwide entrepreneurship network Endeavor also selected Founder and CEO Jonathan Webb for membership. Endeavor leads the global high-impact entrepreneurship movement to drive economic growth and job creation by selecting, mentoring and accelerating the best high-impact entrepreneurs around the world. To date, Endeavor has screened more than 60,000 individuals and selected less than 2,000 founders.

The Kentucky Entrepreneur Hall of Fame also named Webb as one of two Emerging Entrepreneurs in its 2019 class.

Intuit announces 300 jobs in partnership with Sykes

In September 2018, officials from Intuit visited eastern Kentucky to learn more about the region's approach to compete for jobs in the digital economy. The group of leaders learned about successful remote-work training and job placements through Teleworks USA and the SOAR's approach to leveraging connectivity and technology to create employment opportunities throughout Appalachia Kentucky.

Fast forward nearly a year later and Intuit announced a partnership with Sykes to bring 300 jobs to its facility at the Coalfields Regional Industrial Park in Perry County.

Intuit is the creator of QuickBooks, Turbo Tax, and Mint.

SOAR assists Jackson County IDA in creating comprehensive marketing and communications strategy

In the Summer of 2019, the Jackson County Industrial Development Authority (IDA) were at a crossroads. A more than 20-acre tract of land opened up at the Jackson County/McKee Industrial Park, and they wanted to create a marketing and communications strategy to promote the property.

They turned to SOAR for guidance.

Associate Executive Director Joshua Ball held a listening and brainstorming session with members of the IDA and helped draft a communications and marketing plan based upon the consensus on the board.

"I really thought we would have to go to larger metropolitan areas to get something designed that is comparable to what we see in other parts of the state and country," said Rodney Chrisman, a member of the Jackson County IDA board of directors. "We found exactly what we were looking for right here in Eastern Kentucky."

SOAR connected the Jackson County IDA to several Appalachia Kentucky businesses that specialized in graphic design and marketing. The IDA selected KIKO Designs, a Cornerstone Partner of SOAR, to turn their idea into a reality.

"As a person born and raised in Eastern Kentucky, I believe in the potential of our region, and that is a reason I opened



my business," said Misty Feltner, owner of KIKO Designs. "Because of technology and connectivity, I am able to do this kind of work from my home in Perry County. When I met the people in Jackson County, I knew they had something special to promote, and we went to work to deliver a quality product."

What was a quest to create a simple branding document, turned into a complete marketing overhaul. KIKO Designs created a new logo, website, print publication, and produced a 60-second video highlighting the park.

The USA Drone Port, a Blueprint Partner of SOAR, also provided complementary aerial footage of the park for the video.

"Jackson County is open for business, and we now have the pieces in place to let the whole world know," said Chrisman. "We wouldn't have been able to do this without the support of SOAR. They listened and connected us with the right people to turn our idea into a reality."

SOAR **IMPACT**

Local Foods



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

Appalachia Proud program expands, 2,982 members

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture expanded its popular Appalachia Proud brand to encompass all 54 of Kentucky's Appalachian counties as designated by the Appalachian Regional Commission in 2019.

Commissioner Ryan Quarles added the final 17 counties to the program in an announcement made at the 2019 SOAR Summit at the Appalachian Wireless Arena.

The designation added more than 1,000 small businesses to the roster of 2,982 Appalachia Proud members across the region.

The counties added to Appalachia Proud were Adair, Casey, Clark,



Clinton, Cumberland, Edmonson, Fleming, Garrard, Green, Hart, Lincoln, Metcalfe, Monroe, Nicholas, Robertson, Russell, and Wayne counties.

Appalachia Proud was launched in 2014 under the Kentucky Proud umbrella to market agricultural products from eastern Kentucky and encourage agricultural development and education in the region.

In the coming months, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) will refresh the brand with input from the region and members of the brand.

Appalachia Proud is a trademarked brand in the Kentucky Proud family.

SouthDown Farm: Seth and Sheryl Long's story

Seth and Sheryl Long came to Letcher County more than 28 years ago to volunteer for the summer. They fell in love with the mountains and its people, and they never left.

Seth and Sheryl grew up in rural and agriculture-rich Pennsylvania. Seth is the executive director of HOMES (Housing Oriented Ministries Establish for Services, Inc.), the same organization in which he and Sheryl volunteered during the summer of 1991.

The couple owns a 55-acre tract in rural Letcher County, and three years ago, they embarked on a venture to produce maple syrup from an abundance of maple trees found on their property.

SouthDown Farm was formed — A Kentucky Proud and Appalachia Proud member, Seth and Sheryl have 220 maple trees on their farm, and they are leveraging technology to increase sap yields through utilization of 3/16" lines and the



use of Reverse Osmosis system to remove 90% of the water in the extraction process.

Seth and Sheryl have an online store with baked goods and other products. They use the website and social media to promote their farm to those who frequent the Letcher County Farmer's Market. To learn more, visit www.southdownky.com.

Hindman Settlement School: A Champion for Local Foods in Appalachia Kentucky

Championing local foods and addressing food insecurity is at the core of the Hindman Settlement School's emerging foodways programs. The local foods movement brings a multitude of opportunities for producers, food crafters, and entrepreneurs, and Hindman Settlement School, a Blueprint Partner in SOAR, is devoted to supporting our local food system through its Grow Appalachia program along with new initiatives, including the Knott County Farmers Market, The Community Cannery, and The Farm at Hindman Settlement School.

GROW APPALACHIA

Knott County Grow Appalachia seeks to solve the persistent food security issues in the Appalachian region by restoring the historic relationship between people and the land by helping as many people grow as much food as possible using organic and sustainable methods and to encourage more production for local markets. Families in Knott County Grow Appalachia take part in gardening classes, receive help with tilling their gardens, and are provided with plants, seeds, fertilizer. In 2019, Knott County Grow Appalachia added an additional educational series, "Agrilachia," to provide more in-depth courses on production and cultural ties to food and agriculture.

- 62 Families
- 14,987 Pounds of Food
- 612 Educational Hours

KNOTT COUNTY FARMER'S MARKET

The Hindman Settlement School hosts and provides support services to the Knott County Farmers Market. The Market provides affordable, healthy, fresh foods to the people of Knott County, and a space for the community to gather.

Through grant support, the Market is able to offer double dollars to senior citizens and SNAP, EBT, and WIC recipients, and in collaboration with the Knott County Diabetes Coalition, offer Diabetes Dollars, a veggies prescription program for diabetics.

- 26 Vendors
- Increase of 152% more customers per week
- Over 16K in Sales

FARM AND GREENHOUSES

The Hindman Settlement School's small-scale farm operations is nearing the end of its second year of operation. Members of the school's foodways team have incorporated insights from its first year of operation to increasing yields, including modifying the layout of the gardens, streamlining planting and harvesting, and finetuning processes for distribution.

The school has three greenhouses, including a 25'x70' heated high tunnel that produces hydroponically-grown tomatoes and peppers. This allows for 210 plants growing at a time and the team does two plantings per year. The bounty of tomatoes produced in the high tunnel allow the school to sell to local restaurants, schools, and people who are looking to buy large quantities.

In 2019, the school, with the support of Grow Appalachia, constructed a 15' x 50' high tunnel to grow in-ground crops like kale, lettuces, and turnips and extend the season into the winter months.

The Hindman Settlement School plans to construct a 40'x 90' aquaponic greenhouse in 2020.

In addition to vegetable production, the farm team raised three rounds of pastured poultry. Day old chicks are purchased from a hatchery and arrive to us through the mail. After brooding for 3-4 weeks, chickens are moved to mobile pens on the farm where they spend the next 4 weeks outdoors on pasture. Pens are moved daily to a fresh salad bar of grasses and bugs and any other delicacy that they scratch around and find. They are fed a non-GMO chicken feed, of which they have constant access. After 7-8 weeks they are processed and are then sold at Farmers Markets or used in our dining hall.

- Over \$30K in production
- \$10K used in kitchen
- Supplied 40 in the housing authority with a 10 week subscription to our weekly CSA
- 450 Chickens processed
- 7500lbs of Tomatoes

SOAR **IMPACT**

Tourism



Regional Tourism Development — Establish Appalachia Kentucky as a tourism destination

The Kentucky Wildlands: East Kentucky PRIDE to lead new regional tourism marketing campaign

Eastern Kentucky PRIDE announced a new regional tourism marketing campaign entitled “The Kentucky Wildlands” in 2019 and a \$1.15 million POWER Grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) will help roll out the campaign for a 41-county section of Appalachia Kentucky.

The destination branding initiative leverages the region's natural assets and strong cultural heritage to promote new or enhanced traveler experiences in order to increase tourism spending and create tourism as an economic driver for the region.

The Kentucky Wildlands aims to capture the majesty of the Appalachian Mountains and the wildlife that can be found throughout our region. New tourism opportunities are rapidly

developing in our counties, like new hiking and biking trails, new water recreation, ziplining, rock climbing, kayaking and more. This marketing campaign will include a new tourism website; print, billboard, television, and online advertising; tourism guides and brochures; and branded merchandise.

For every dollar spent on advertising, \$151 is returned with visitor spending and over \$15 in state and local revenue. The project establishes a robust marketing and branding plan, with \$500,000 set aside for marketing the region, creating a potential revenue of \$75.5 million throughout Appalachia Kentucky.

The two-year plan will also foster small business creation as tourism increases in the region.

Boone's Ridge on track to open in 2021

In 2019, officials with the Appalachian Wildlife Foundation changed the name of the Appalachian Wildlife Center to Boone's Ridge.

While the name changed, the impact of the project hasn't. Construction is ongoing for what officials are calling a destination that could attract upwards of 850,000 annually and create thousands of jobs. The name change is also a representation of Daniel Boone and his history throughout the region.

Boone's Ridge will inhabit 12,000 acres in Bell County and will be home to miles of trails, several museums, a theater, a restaurant, an artisans' exhibit hall, a gift shop, bird observatories, and a zoo.

In 2019, the Appalachian Wildlife Foundation, a Blueprint Partner of SOAR, was awarded a \$23.5 million loan guarantee from the United States Department of Agriculture.

For more information, visit www.boonesridge.com.

APPALACHIAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION IMPACT ESTIMATE OF BOONE'S RIDGE

2,900+ New jobs | **\$174 M+** Annual Spending

SOAR **IMPACT**

Partners

More than 250 organizations and individuals have partnered to make this work possible. Our Partners are at the core of Creating a Future in Appalachia as they are local individuals, organizations, and businesses that represent the fabric of our region. Partnering with local people that live here means the promise to create opportunity is not an empty promise, it is a shared goal that we all benefit from. Even if you haven't made it official, if you share the common goal of building a brighter tomorrow here, you are already a partner in Creating a Future in Appalachia.

CREATING A FUTURE IN APPALACHIA, TOGETHER

PRESENTING PARTNERS



FOUNDING PARTNERS



EAST KENTUCKY PARTNERS



SOAR **IMPACT**

UNITY PARTNERS



CORNERSTONE PARTNERS



GRASSROOTS PARTNERS



PUBLIC PARTNERS



250 BLUEPRINT PARTNERS

SOAR-KY.ORG

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