

# Impact Report 2017



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## SOAR OVERVIEW

### MISSION

SOAR's mission is to expand job creation, enhance regional opportunity, innovation, and identity, improve 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, 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 Appa-

lachia 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, individual

successes will be celebrated and promoted as regional 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 an individual purpose to pursue in building a 21st Century Appalachia.

**STRATEGY** | Thinking and planning are critically important to building a 21st Century Appalachia. We believe there are significant, long-term benefits to spending adequate time focusing on what is important

but not urgent. The Regional Blueprint is our region's strategic guide to making this shared 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.

## OUR TEAM

### BOARD MEMBERS

Bruce Ayers  
Jim Booth  
Jean Hale  
Rodney Hitch  
Jim Host  
Tom Hunter  
Kim McCann  
Haley McCoy  
Bob Mitchell

### CO-CHAIRS

Governor Matt Bevin  
Congressman Hal Rogers

### TREASURER

Donovan Blackburn

### EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS


Kentucky Speaker of the House  
Kentucky Senate President  
Albey Brock  
Dr. Charles Hardin

### SOAR STAFF

Jared Arnett, *Executive Director*  
Joshua Ball, *Associate Executive Director*  
Kevin Loux, *Director of Strategic Partnerships*  
Keriston Smith, *Chief Financial Officer*  
LCDR Jenna Meyer, *CDC Public Health Advisor*  
Megan Williams, *CDC Public Health Advisor*

### ADVISORY COUNCIL

Lonnie Lawson	Rodney Hitch
Phillip Elswick	Brad Hall
Jeff Whitehead	Daniel Wilson
Johnathan Gay	Sandy Runyon
Doug Jones	Phil Osborne
Dr. William Hacker	



*“Our network of partners are helping write the story, and we are blessed to get to share it.”*

# WELCOME

It is truly humbling to look back across 2017 and see the progress being made throughout Appalachia Kentucky. It's an honor to present this impact report for your review. SOAR is a network of people and organizations who believe in our future and are working together to build a 21st Century Appalachia. The people we work with throughout the year are leaders who are visionary and care about our future. We respect our past, but we are committed to OUR future. In 2017, our team at SOAR worked within the realm of three important areas of focus.

## **Drive Action** – Aligned with the Regional Blueprint

Change that is transformative is often disruptive. Every disruption begins with a catalyst, and we strive to be that catalyst. There are times we lead initiatives, times we participate, and other times when we simply support people who are already doing great work that aligns strategically with the blueprint. We make new things happen and expand great work that's already underway. Through our work, we promoted broadband expansion and adoption rates, cultivated partnerships that aligned with our Regional Blueprint, and engaged stakeholders from across industry sectors to develop innovations in process and programs.





### **Be the Champion – Promote and Inspire Appalachia Kentucky**

Every underdog needs a champion. Someone to provide guidance and encouragement, someone to celebrate progress and victories with them. Most importantly, someone who believes they can do it. There are multiple stories of hope and transformation across the region that we love to share; locally and nationally our team promoted the narrative of hope and opportunity in Appalachia Kentucky. Our network of partners are helping write the story, and we are blessed to get to share it. The narrative is one of hope and promise and one deeply rooted in the heritage of a proud culture that will be a catalyst for our future. Through our work, we are flipping the script. The narrative is no longer focused on challenges, but instead, it is forward-focused toward tangible solutions and opportunities.

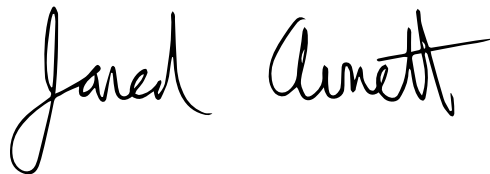
### **Grow The Team – In Number and Capacity**

To build a 21st Century Appalachia, we need widespread participation and coordinated action across geographies, organizations, and individuals. This year we have implemented our Blueprint Partnership program allowing for individuals and organizations to formally commit to assist in implementing the blueprint. We are committed to helping grow the size of our network, and the capacity of our partners.

The narrative of hopelessness is gone. We believe the debate is over. There is a future in Appalachia Kentucky. We are in the midst of one of the greatest economic turnarounds in our nation's history. We've moved the needle in 2017, but the work continues. We will not rest until every person in Appalachia Kentucky has access to profound opportunities to work and thrive in a 21st Century Appalachia.

Through the pages of this report, you will see our Regional Blueprint in action. You'll find hope, promise, and an unwavering sense of faith and grit that is driving economic diversity across our region.

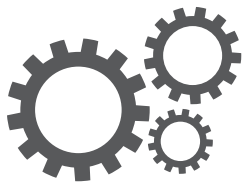
We invite you to be a part of the journey, as we continue to SOAR.



**Jared Arnett**  
Executive Director, SOAR

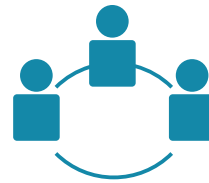


# BUILDING A 21ST CENTURY APPALACHIA. TOGETHER.



## MUTUALLY REINFORCING ACTIVITIES

SOAR Advisory Council, Roundtables, & Annual Summit



## A 'BACKBONE' COORDINATING ORGANIZATION(S)

Shaping Our Appalachian Region, Inc. (SOAR)



## Collective Impact



## OPEN AND CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION

SOAR.network, Newsletters, & Social Media

## A COMMON AGENDA FOR CHANGE

Blueprint for a 21st Century Appalachia



SOAR embraces Collective Impact methodologies. Collective Impact is an innovative and collaborative model that provides a framework to tackle deeply entrenched and complex social problems. It is an innovative and structured approach to making collaboration work across government, business, philanthropy, non-profit organizations and citizens to achieve significant and lasting social change.

Source: [collaborationforimpact.com/collective-impact](http://collaborationforimpact.com/collective-impact)



# GREETINGS FROM OUR CO-CHAIRS

The challenges facing Appalachia Kentucky are broad and often complex, but the solution lies within our citizens' ingenuity, and the desire to build a 21st Century Appalachia. The work of Shaping Our Appalachian Region, Inc. (SOAR) is transformative on many fronts. We have created the Regional Blueprint that provides a common agenda and outlines distinct and clear objectives to building a connected economy.

And we're doing our part. In 2017, we have worked together to bring new investments that build on the vast human capital available to business and industry across Appalachia Kentucky.

## Braidy Industries

In April 2017, Braidy Industries announced its plans to make a \$1.3 billion investment in Boyd and Greenup counties to build an aluminum mill and create 550 permanent jobs and more than 1,000 supporting jobs. The company will locate on a 600-acre spot at the EastPark industrial site. Part of Braidy's decision to locate to Appalachia Kentucky was access to a highly-skilled workforce, and the regional collaboration demonstrated from partners in the public and private sectors.

## Thoroughbred Aviation

In June 2017, Thoroughbred Aviation announced plans to open a facility at the Big Sandy Regional Airport in Martin County. The company, which specializes in aircraft maintenance, avionics, painting and structural repair, along with overhauling and refurbishment, has plans to hire 15 people. This project was a result of the collaboration between our offices and One East Kentucky, a non-profit, privately funded regional economic development organization representing nine counties in eastern Kentucky.

## Wright-Mix

Wright-Mix Material Solutions LLC announced in July 2017 an \$8.5 million investment to build a production facility at the river port in Boyd and Greenup counties, creating 130 full-time jobs. The company plans to renovate an existing building at the Greenup/Boyd Riverport at Wurtland, increasing its size to 80,000 square feet and preparing it for fully automated toll

blending and bagging operations. The company also will build storage facilities to house raw materials and finished products.

## ShellTech

ShellTech LLC, a subsidiary of Shell Shock Technologies LLC, announced plans in June 2017 to locate an ammunition shell casing factory in Pulaski County with a \$3.2 million investment that will create 50 full-time jobs. The company's new facility in Eubank will manufacture lightweight, nickel-alloy and aluminum NAS<sup>3</sup> cartridge cases designed by its parent company, Shell Shock Technologies LLC of Westport, Conn.

## AppHarvest

In February 2017, agricultural startup AppHarvest announced plans to build a \$50 million high-tech greenhouse, creating 140 full-time jobs in Pikeville at a former surface coal mine repurposed for new industry. The company's 2 million square-foot greenhouse will rank among the world's largest. The high-tech facility will feature computerized monitoring and cutting-edge hydroponic, above-ground growing systems.

Working together, we are making a difference that is impacting the lives of Kentuckians now and for generations to come. While we've made significant strides, we have more work to do. We can't do it without your support at the ground level.

Let's SOAR...Together.



**Matt Bevin**  
SOAR Co-Chair  
Governor of Kentucky



**Hal Rogers**  
SOAR Co-Chair  
U.S. Representative



# SOAR SUMMIT '17

1,200+ REPRESENTING  
ATTENDEES 13 STATES & 55  
133 SOLUTIONS KENTUCKY  
SHOWCASED COUNTIES

Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR) held its fourth-annual summit at the East Kentucky Expo Center on August 4th. More than 1,200 people from across Appalachia Kentucky attended the day-long event, which featured showcases from more than 130 organizations.

"This convening of believers validates that there's a future in Appalachia," said Jared Arnett, executive director of SOAR. "This year's summit was not about what we plan to do, but instead about what we are doing. SOAR has its hands in many different projects, but the main thing we are doing is building a Connected Appalachia. We are empowering those who have dreams to turn them into a reality; we are blurring county lines and working in a unified effort to bring jobs and other development to our region; and we are demonstrating the faith and grit that will get us to the

ultimate destination of Appalachia Kentucky being full of opportunities for all who seek it."

University of Kentucky men's basketball coach John Calipari was the keynote speaker at the Summit. He spoke of the traits of being a servant leader.

"In Eastern Kentucky, you are all about each other," said Calipari. "You have an unbelievable pride about this. It's about servant leadership and being a good teammate. When you are climbing the ladder, you are bringing people along with you. You are paying it forward."

Calipari ended his remarks with a call to action to those in attendance: "Let's bring it. Let's go. Let's make changes!"



Congressman Harold "Hal" Rogers and Governor Matt Bevin, who serve as co-chairs of SOAR, spoke of the progress taking place in Appalachia Kentucky because of SOAR.

"We are beginning to see the fruits of our collaborative efforts," said Congressman Rogers. "The more we can prove to ourselves that we can work together, good things will happen and this organization will continue to SOAR."

Governor Matt Bevin shared a quote from philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."

"There's enthusiasm, pride, and a sense of dignity here," said Governor Bevin. "It's one of the things I appreciate about Eastern Kentucky. It's an area where people want to work, where there's pride, people have a sense of home and people have a sense of community."

Other featured speakers at the summit included: Max Espinoza, senior program officer with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; Phillip Brown, executive director of the Kentucky Communications Network Authority (KCNA); Joan Ferrini-Mundy, chief operating officer of the National Science Foundation; and John Stephenson, senior manager for public policy at Amazon Web Services.



**TOP** | SOAR Executive Director Jared Arnett. **MIDDLE** | University of Kentucky men's basketball coach John Calipari. **BOTTOM** | Governor Matt Bevin, National Science Foundation Chief Operating Officer Dr. Joan Ferrini-Mundy, and Congressman Hal Rogers.

# REGIONAL BLUEPRINT GOALS



**GOAL 1:** Increase the availability of affordable high-speed broadband, through fiber, to businesses and residents, and increase adoption rates throughout the SOAR region



**GOAL 5:** Increase the amount of industrial employment which includes manufacturing, natural resources, processing, and distribution by expanding existing companies and attracting new ones



**GOAL 2:** Develop our regional workforce to be competitive in the digital economy and other emerging industries



**GOAL 6:** Create a local foods movement by connecting local producers to markets or their products both within and outside of the region



**GOAL 3:** To create more and expand existing small businesses within the region by taking full advantage of the digital economy



**GOAL 7:** Establish Kentucky's Appalachian region as a tourism destination



**GOAL 4:** To reduce the physical and economic impact of obesity, diabetes, and substance abuse

Read the full blueprint at  
[soar-ky.org/blueprint](http://soar-ky.org/blueprint)

## SOAR 2017 PROGRAM OF WORK



**DRIVE ACTION:** aligned with the Regional Blueprint

- Drive broadband expansion and adoption
- Cultivate partnerships to lead the implementation of strategies aligned with the SOAR Blueprint ([soar-ky.org/blueprint](http://soar-ky.org/blueprint))
- Engage key stakeholders across all industry sectors to continuously develop innovations in process and programs



**BE THE CHAMPION:** promoting and inspiring Appalachia Kentucky

- Demonstrate expertise on Appalachian strategy and approach by communicating the Regional Blueprint to stakeholders
- Change the narrative of Appalachia from a focus on challenges to opportunity



**GROW THE TEAM:** in number and capacity of our partners

- Launch SOAR.network to connect leaders, drive action and champion strategically aligned efforts in the region
- Develop regional branding efforts to solidify and build a feeling of ownership by people throughout the region
- Support engaged partners at the local level

# WHAT IS THE BLUEPRINT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM?

Our vision is a 21st Century Appalachia. We have a blueprint, a plan, on how to make this vision a reality, but we cannot do it alone. We need partners to do it. Not only partners to invest in SOAR, but partners who take collective ownership of the blueprint and commit to implementing it within their realm of influence. This program will allow SOAR to build a formalized network of organizations across the region, state, and country who are committed to helping us **implement the Regional Blueprint**.

SOAR is currently working with the best in the region to facilitate change, and it is only natural that we formalize these partnerships with change agents to provide them with access to our network. By leveraging the resources of SOAR, capacity and support through SOAR.network, and the passion of the region, we will achieve transformation. **Visit [www.soar-ky.org/partner](http://www.soar-ky.org/partner) to join the Blueprint Partnership Program today**

Building a 21st Century Appalachia.



**PROGRAM  
OF WORK**



**OUR PLAN**

[soar-ky.org/blueprint](http://soar-ky.org/blueprint)



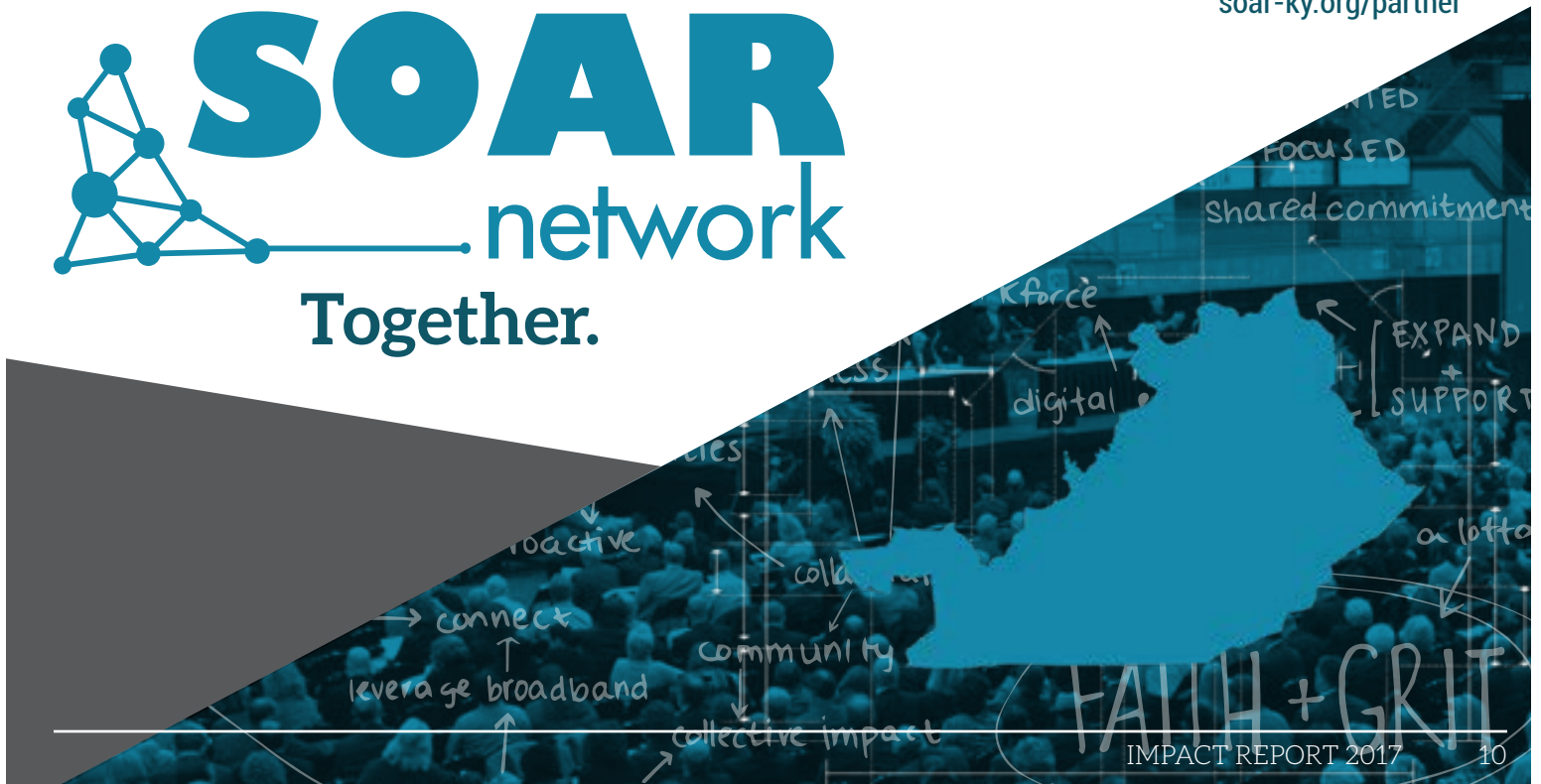
**OUR TEAM**

[soar.network](http://soar.network)



**OUR WORK**

[soar-ky.org/partner](http://soar-ky.org/partner)





## SOAR ANNOUNCES BB&T MINI-GRANT RECIPIENTS

***Manchester Memorial  
Hospital's Telehealth  
program earns  
top grant***

Shaping Our Appalachian Region, Inc. (SOAR) announced the recipients of its Mini-Grant program during the 2017 SOAR Summit on August 4th at the East Kentucky Expo Center.

The Mini-Grant program was available through the generous support of BB&T Bank and the proceeds from the second-annual SOAR 5K. This year, SOAR awarded 11 organizations with grants. Ten recipients received \$1,000. Manchester Memorial Hospital's Telehealth program, pictured above with Marlo Long, senior vice president of community development specialist, and SOAR Executive Director Jared Arnett, was named the top solution and awarded \$2,000. This program will serve the people of Clay, Owsley, Jackson and Leslie counties. Funds will be used to purchase equipment necessary to deploy a Telehealth Clinic in the Lee County School District, and a Tele-ICU and Tele-ED on the main campus of the hospital, as well as a Tele-Neuro in a Rural Health Clinic.

Other recipients were: Last Mile Fiber Infrastructure Regional Forums/Boards (Letcher and Perry counties), Paths2Promise (Bell, Clay, Harlan, Knox, Leslie, Letcher, Perry, and Whitley counties), America's Entrepreneurial Schools

and Colleges (Bell, Breathitt, Harlan, Knott, Knox, Leslie, Letcher, Martin, Magoffin, Perry, and Pike counties), Appalachian Pregnancy Care Center (Pike County), Cultivating a Culture of Health in Appalachia (Boyd, Carter, Elliott, Greenup, Lawrence, and Lewis counties), Community Health Initiatives (Knox, Harlan, Jackson, Magoffin and Pike counties), Homeplace Clinic (Lawrence, Johnson, Floyd, and Pike counties), Teleworks USA (Bell, Breathitt, Carter, Clay, Elliott, Floyd, Harlan, Jackson, Johnson, Knott, Knox, Lawrence, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Magoffin, Martin, Menifee, Morgan, Owsley, Perry, Pike, and Wolfe counties), Pikeville Farmers Market Production Initiatives (Pike County), and the Himler Project (Martin County).





### ENERBLU ANNOUNCES 875 JOBS IN EASTERN KENTUCKY

Power solutions provider EnerBlu, Inc. announced in December a \$372 million advanced battery manufacturing facility would be built at the Kentucky Enterprise Industrial Park in Pikeville, bringing 875 jobs with an average pay of \$39 an hour.

EnerBlu will construct a 1 million-square-foot, high-tech facility to manufacture lithium-titanate (LTO) batteries, called EnerBlu Advanced Energy Storage Units. The batteries will power transit buses, commercial trucks, military vehicles and other equipment. Construction is scheduled to start in mid-2018 and the facility's opening is planned for 2020.

Shaping Our Appalachian Region, Inc. (SOAR) worked with company officials from the inception of the idea and sponsored the first site visit for EnerBlu officials. The project demonstrated the collaboration that is at the core of SOAR's mission. Partners in the project included SOAR Co-Chairs Congressman Hal Rogers and Governor Matt Bevin, the state economic development cabinet, the city of Pikeville, One East Kentucky, Kentucky Power, and others.

EnerBlu plans to manufacture high-performance batteries for buses and other large vehicles. A new manufacturing facility will be constructed in Pikeville in the next two to three years.



### AML PROJECTS TO BOOST REGIONAL TOURISM

Regional tourism continues to play an important role in building a 21st Century Appalachia. Through the work of SOAR, communities are sharing ideas and building a comprehensive plan that will make Appalachia Kentucky a tourism destination.

Through the support of three Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) Pilot Program grants, three projects in Appalachia Kentucky received substantial funding in 2017 to enhance tourism-related activities in their respective communities. This included \$1.95 million to the development of the South Fork Elk View water line and campground in Breathitt County; \$1.95 million to the city of Prestonsburg for the development of the Rails to Trails project, which will build a trail from the city of Prestonsburg to the town of David in Floyd County; and \$1.95 million to the Royalton Trail Town, Inc. for the development of a campsite and recreational area near the Dawkins Line Rail Trail and the Licking River.

The announcements were made by SOAR Co-Chair Congressman Hal Rogers, who has led efforts to champion \$195 million in federal funding through the AML Pilot Program over the last two years. The grants are administered through the Energy and Environment cabinet through the office of the Governor and SOAR Co-Chair Matt Bevin.



# EASTERN KENTUCKY CONCENTRATED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM, INC.



### PROGRAM OF WORK

As staff to the Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board, the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (EKCEP), Inc., actively assists the unemployed connect with new job opportunities while also identifying specific workforce needs for employers within the agency's 23-county service area.

EKCEP, a grassroots partner of Shaping Our Appalachian Region, Inc. (SOAR), also administers or participates in multiple programs and initiatives that benefit from the support and partnership with SOAR. Additionally, these initiatives align closely with aspects of SOAR's Regional Blueprint, specifically goals relating to the expansion of small business and preparing the workforce for employment in the digital economy.

In a recent statement, EKCEP Executive Director Jeff Whitehead noted the importance of SOAR lending its support to these efforts.

"We believe that if our regional economy is to recover following the coal industry collapse, it must be a collaborative effort," Whitehead said. "SOAR's partnership and support adds legitimacy and a regional push

### BLUEPRINT GOALS

to what EKCEP is doing within Eastern Kentucky, and it makes the likelihood of success that much greater."

#### Teleworks USA

Specifically, SOAR has played a supportive role in the expansion and development of Teleworks USA within the region.

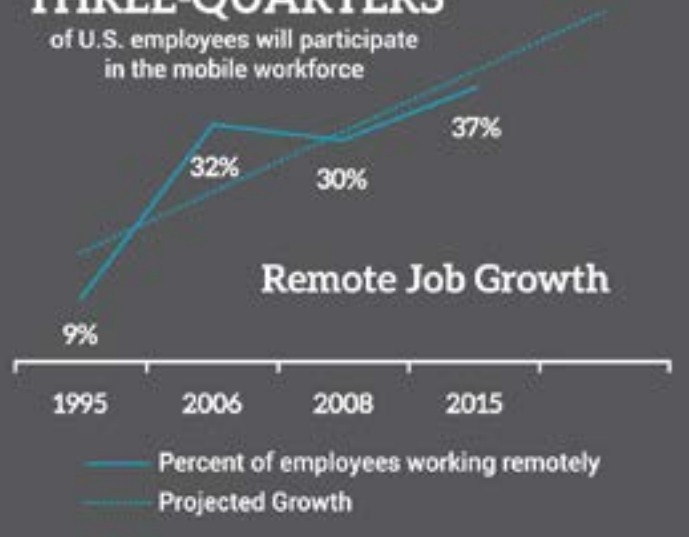
An initiative of EKCEP, Teleworks USA identifies and develops legitimate remote-work, distance learning opportunities, and helps to prepare people for the jobs by training them in customer service and digital literacy, working with them on creating résumés and developing superior interviewing skills, then applying for and obtaining legitimate work-from-home positions through its website, [www.teleworksusa.com](http://www.teleworksusa.com).

In 2016, SOAR awarded a KARD grant of \$92,500 to the Booneville Teleworks Hub in Owsley County. The hub opened in July 2016, and has since helped create 118 new telework jobs within Owsley County, accounting for an estimated economic impact of more than \$2.5 million in new wages for a county with a to-



## BY 2020 THREE-QUARTERS

of U.S. employees will participate  
in the mobile workforce



tal population of less than 5,000 people.

Teleworks USA also operates seven additional hubs in Harlan, Jackson, Lawrence, Lee, Leslie, Perry, and Pike counties. Collectively, since January 2015 Teleworks USA's system of hubs helped create more than 1,100 telework jobs with an estimated economic impact of \$20.1 million in new wages for Eastern Kentucky counties.

In 2017, SOAR also provided Teleworks USA with a \$1,000 BB&T Bank Mini Grant that will cover one month's Teleworks Hub co-workspace fee for up to 13 occupants in any of Teleworks USA's Teleworks Hubs based on need and personal barriers.

These positions could account for an estimated \$1.7 million in new annual wages for these tech workers.

### TechHire Eastern Kentucky

SOAR is also a partner in TechHire Eastern Kentucky, a continuing, long-term effort within Kentucky's Appalachian region that identifies and develops fast-track training and employment opportunities for workers in the digital economy.

Launched in 2015, EKCEP is the regional and strategic lead for TechHire Eastern Kentucky, though the program benefits greatly from a dedicated group of partners, including tech and tech-related employers, higher education, and regional economic development organizations.

Inclusive of all TechHire Eastern Kentucky efforts and employer partnerships dating back to early 2015, there are currently 43 tech employees in Eastern Kentucky.

### Other Initiatives

Other EKCEP programs that align with the SOAR blueprint include a program that assists local small business owners experience growth and preserve or create jobs through e-commerce strategies. Activities include e-commerce training, business marketing and promotion, training for businesses and entrepreneurs, and website development.

EKCEP is additionally working with the East Kentucky Advanced Manufacturing Institute (eKAMI) in Paintsville, Ky., to train and certify an inaugural class of 12 people in the operation of computer numerical control (CNC) machines. Once trained, these individuals will be able to enter the advanced manufacturing sector, which is currently seeing a high demand for new workers.

# THE POWER OF COLLABORATION IN HELPING THOSE WHO COMPLETE ADDICTION PROGRAMS

In 2017, Shaping Our Appalachian Region, Inc. (SOAR) partnered on a collaboration with Addiction Recovery Care, the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program, Inc. (EKCEP), and Sullivan University to start a Peer Support Specialist Academy.

Peer Support Specialists are Behavioral Health Practitioners, recognized by Kentucky Medicaid. They provide a vital link to support and foster recovery in their communities through experience and learned skills. The opportunity to work within health and recovery centers, like Addiction Recovery Care, creates unique and promising employment and educational prospects. By eliminating barriers faced by those overcoming addiction, treatment and recovery open the door to a brighter future.

To be eligible for the program, a person must have successfully completed a state-recognized treatment program; be clean and sober for 12 months; have earned a GED or high school diploma; and completed a 40-hour training course by a certified entity. Since the state implemented the program, Addiction Recovery Care has trained more than half of the state's Peer Support Specialists.

"This would have never happened if it wasn't for



SOAR. We initially had an idea and SOAR helped us connect the dots and find the resources to turn this idea into a reality," said Tim Robinson, president and CEO of Addiction Recovery Care. "One of the biggest barriers facing those who complete treatment is finding gainful employment. This program eliminates that barrier. It allows those who complete the program the opportunity to work in the field and to give back."

Since the program started, 31 people have successfully completed the program. Of that number, 17 are working at Addiction Recovery Care as Peer Support Specialist.

## DIGITAL CAREERS NOW PROVIDING CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Shaping Our Appalachian Region, Inc. (SOAR) was a partner in a \$3.5 million POWER grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) awarded to Big Sandy Community and Technical College for the Eastern Kentucky Coal County Transformation project. The project has evolved into the Digital Careers Now program and includes Southeast Kentucky Com-

munity and Technical College, Hazard Community and Technical College, and the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program, Inc. (EKCEP).

The mission of the program is to provide in-hand career opportunities through an accelerated training model and industry-driven internships. The pathway will provide real-time opportunities with companies, both locally and globally.



# HELPING COMMUNITIES IDENTIFY FINAL-MILE BROADBAND SOLUTIONS



Through a partnership with the Commonwealth of Kentucky on the KentuckyWired project, The Center for Rural Development (The Center) and Shaping Our Appalachian Region, Inc. (SOAR) are making progress on addressing the digital divide for Eastern Kentucky.

The KentuckyWired project, an ambitious endeavor to bring high-speed, high-capacity middle-mile internet access to every county in Kentucky, will change the digital landscape of Eastern Kentucky. This project will bring equal opportunity to all counties and facilitate the delivery of affordable high-speed broadband.

Once these middle mile access points are available, our communities will then have the opportunity to build out from there. There are many ways to accomplish this “final-mile” build and each community will seek its own solution. It may be in working with existing local internet providers or encouraging the formation of new ones if they don’t currently exist. It may also be that communities will want to build public fiber infrastructure to the homes and businesses. It may even take a mixture of creative partnering and planning to see that everyone is served.

The Center and SOAR have created the Last-Mile Ac-

**3** EVENTS **SOMERSET, HAZARD, AND MOREHEAD** **>270** ATTENDEES

tion Team (LMAT) to help communities through this process. Through this partnership, and with the help of a talented and diverse team of individuals, we are providing technical assistance and are educating communities on virtually every aspect of developing internet access and adoption strategies.

The LMAT has created a series of daylong workshops that bring in experts from around the nation and throughout Kentucky to answer questions and provide advice. These workshops have been well attended and the participants have been very engaged in discussions ranging from technical acumen to financial and management strategies. The Center also offers one-on-one and public awareness assistance. For more information, visit [soar-ky.org/last-mile](http://soar-ky.org/last-mile).



## REDUCING HEALTH DISPARITIES AND IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORT

SOAR Healthy Communities is possible through a partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). CDC recognizes both the challenges and opportunities that exist in rural health and have dedicated two full-time staff members to provide support through public health expertise, planning, guidance and community level capacity building.

Through education, prevention and awareness of current and emerging health threats to the region, those engaged in SOAR Healthy Communities are united by their shared goals and vision. SOAR provides the platform to promote innovative programs, aligns stakeholders and drives action through communication and facilitation. Participation in numerous coalitions, working groups and educational events – gaining valuable community input – the SOAR Healthy Community team continually strive to strengthen community partnerships and collaborations with stakeholders to increase focus on health and disease prevention throughout the region.

### Diabetes and Obesity Roundtable

In March, more than 100 people participated in an Obesity and Diabetes Roundtable at Union College. Co-sponsored by Union College of Nursing, people from various sectors gathered to learn new approaches, bring attention to their efforts and network. The solution-driven event featured experts from CDC and the Appalachian Regional Commission – highlighting the economic impact of diabetes and showcasing tools that communities could use to demonstrate that impact to local governments or community stakeholders. These tools can help communities implement innovative, evidence based programs to address regional health disparities in access, quality of care and health outcomes.

Valerie Horn, of Community Farm Alliance, presented the innovative and collaborative approach to increase access to healthy, affordable foods and opportunities



for physical activity. She spoke of the work being done in Letcher County, including the creation of a summer feeding program in conjunction with the county farmers' market, physicians writing prescriptions for produce at the farmers' market and building a walking trail in town.

"I know for people in our community it's not a matter of choice. They would be choosing or making healthier choices if they were available to them, or if they had the funds, the resources to afford them," Horn said.

### Fit and Grit 5K

In June, the second annual SOAR sponsored event to increase physical activity, Fit and Grit 5K Run/Walk, was held in Pikeville. The event, which also consisted of a mini health fair, featured more than 250 runners and 50 community partners.

Proceeds raised from the event went to micro-grants supporting health and wellness initiatives across the region. This year's recipients were Manchester Memorial Hospital, Cultivating a Culture of Health in Appalachia, Community Health Initiatives, HomePlace Clinic, and the Pikeville Farmers Market.





## Provider Education

More than 500 healthcare professionals and students attended a Provider Education of Substance Use Disorder in October at the University of Pikeville. The event was also viewed via live stream at 29 remote sites in six states.

Federal, state, regional and local experts shared the science and practice behind addiction and the consequences of addiction in communities. Current and future health care providers have a responsibility to provide health care and treatment that will reduce the scope and impact of substance use disorder and related consequences through education, awareness, prevention, and access to services.

Pikeville Medical Center Chief of Staff Dr. Fadi Al Akhrass spoke of infectious disease complications of Substance Use Disorder.

Hepatitis C has affected more than 53,000 in Kentucky and Kentucky currently has the highest rate of Hepatitis C rates in the nation. Syringe service programs, approved locally and administered by local health departments, can provide lifesaving access to clean needles, overdose reversal agents, infectious disease testing, access to treatment and social services.

"It's important for drug users to not exchange needles to avoid complications such as hepatitis C and HIV,"

said Dr. Akhrass. "It's not the perfect solution, but it's a start."

Other presentations included approaches to treat pregnant women with substance use disorder and their infants that are exposed in utero and may develop Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome, or withdrawal after birth. UK Pathways and Pregnancy and Beyond at Hazard Primary Care Clinic, is working to reduce the impact of substance abuse on these moms and babies through wrap-around social services and coordinated treatment.

Various programs, tools and resources were shared with participants with the ultimate goal of increasing awareness and driving action through education.



**TOP** | Union College of Nursing students pose with LCDR Jenna Meyer, SOAR Executive Director Jared Arnett, SOAR Health Chair William Hacker, MD, CDC Health Scientist Bryce Smith and Eric Stockton with the Appalachian Regional Commission at the Obesity and Diabetes Roundtable in Barbourville. **BOTTOM** | Former University of Kentucky men's basketball player Rex Chapman speaks at the SOAR Provider Education event on the reality of addiction and recovery.

# AMERICAN METAL WORKS THRIVING

When James Glass and Dennis Rohrer had conceived of a Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Advanced Manufacturing company, one of the first places they looked to for help was Shaping Our Appalachian Region, Inc. (SOAR).

SOAR helped Glass and Rohrer connect with resources and contacts that eventually turned their dream into a reality. American Metal Works (AMW) was formed in 2016 at the Business Incubator at Big Sandy Community and Technical College's Mayo campus in Paintsville.

In 2017, the company was the first in eastern Kentucky to participate in the state's apprenticeship program and their staff has doubled since its opening. AMW employs 10 people, including four apprenticeship participants. Five of the company's employees were displaced from the coal and oil sectors.

Some of AMW's clients include customers making high security locking systems, components for drones, a storage tank for the Department of Defense,



and parts for a satellite built by the Morehead State University Space Science Center that will orbit the moon in 2019.

AMW is a HubZone company and will be receiving its AS9100D/ISO9011:2015 certifications in 2018. The company hopes to employ 50 team members over the next five years.

## RE-IGNITING APPALACHIA KENTUCKY'S COAL COUNTRY THROUGH AGRICULTURE

AppHarvest, an agricultural startup, announced in February its plans to construct a world-class hydroponics greenhouse in Pike County, creating 140 jobs. The \$50 million investment will create a two-million square foot greenhouse and rank among the largest in the world. It will be built on a 60-acre tract of land at the Kentucky Enterprise Industrial Park, a reclaimed mine site.

"AppHarvest's greenhouse will be a vehicle for new opportunity in Appalachia and beyond," said Jonathan Webb, founder and CEO of AppHarvest. "We are appreciative of all the people that have made this possible in eastern Kentucky, including SOAR. They have



been with us every step of the way, and our approach to economic development aligns perfectly with their Regional Blueprint."

AppHarvest anticipates breaking ground in early 2018 and plans to be fully operational by the end of the year.

# MSU'S SPACE SCIENCE CENTER GAINING WORLDWIDE ATTENTION

Some of the world's most cutting-edge satellite technology is coming from the campus of Morehead State University (MSU) in Eastern Kentucky. The Space Science Center at MSU specializes in micro and nanosatellites and has evolved into an internationally-recognized center for research in these "smallsat" technologies. These satellites are extremely small (loaf of bread-size to the size of a small suitcase) and they orbit Earth in formations. They are being used by NASA, the Department of Defense, private aerospace companies - and MSU is at the forefront of this emerging technology.

The Center's facility, which was established in 2009, is a \$16 million, 45,000 square-foot building with state-of-the-art laboratories that includes research and development infrastructure required to develop nanosatellite technologies from the concept to the design, to fabrication and testing, and mission operations. MSU and the Space Science Center have worked closely with Shaping Our Appalachian Region, Inc. (SOAR) since its inception.

"The goals of the Space Science Center are closely aligned with those of the SOAR initiative," said Dr. Benjamin Malphrus, director of MSU's Space Science Center. "Our goal of promoting regional economic development through innovative research and development in space system technologies and through contributing to the development of a workforce for the growing aerospace industry in Kentucky is consistent with the SOAR initiative mission and represents the Space Science Center's contribution to this outstanding initiative that we believe will have a major long-term impact on the economy of Appalachia."

In September, Congressman Hal Rogers, co-chair of SOAR, brought NASA Acting Administrator Robert M.



PROGRAM OF WORK

BLUEPRINT GOALS

Lightfoot Jr. to MSU and its Space Science Center. Kentucky Lieutenant Governor Janean Hampton was also in attendance.

Morehead State faculty and students have built and launched six satellites to Earth orbit since 2006 (Ky-Sat-2, CXBN, Eagle-1, Eagle-2, UniSat-5, and CXBN-2) with a major mission currently under development. The Center, which is home to one of five space science programs in the country, is currently managing seven NASA contracts.

The Center was instrumental in establishing aerospace as the number one industry in Kentucky through workforce development and through its contributions to research and development in astronautics. Through the work of the Space Science Center and state and local leadership, Rajant Corporation, a pioneer of kinetic mesh networking technology, opened a facility in Morehead in 2015.

## BLUEPRINT IN ACTION

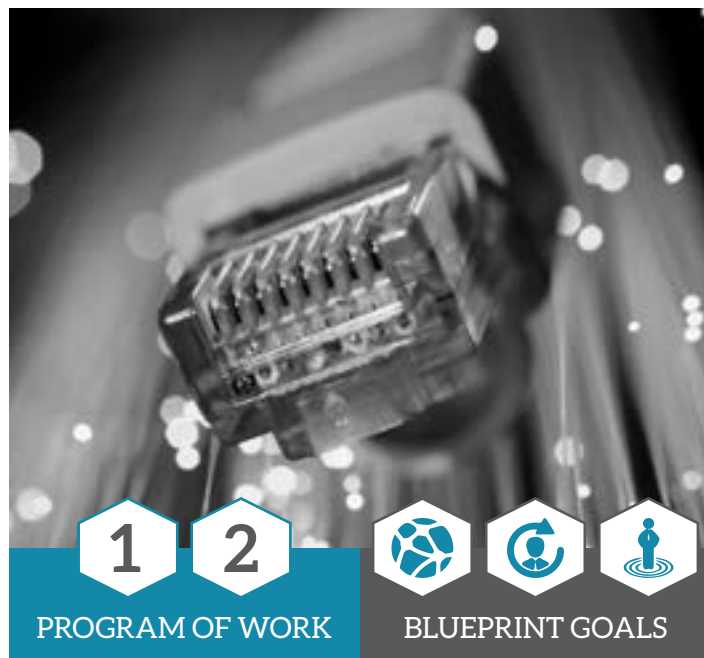


### SILVER LINER ANNOUNCES OPENING OF FACTORY

Silver Liner, a tanker truck manufacturing company, announced in October that it would occupy a 60,000-square foot building at the Kentucky Enterprise Industrial Park in Pikeville. SOAR Executive Director Jared Arnett and Co-Chair Congressman Hal Rogers attended the official announcement and spoke to those in attendance.

"We have a winning team and I want us to stay as a team. We can make good things happen to provide jobs to keep our young people here," Congressman Rogers said. The building was part of one of the first Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) Pilot grants which provided \$5 million for construction of the building.

Silver Liner is a Blueprint Partner with SOAR and they are implementing the Regional Blueprint on several fronts, including increasing industrial employment, creating and expanding small business, and developing the workforce to be competitive in a digital economy. The company will move into the new facility in 2019 and is expected to hire 50 people at an average wage of \$50,000 a year.



### eTEAMS PILOT PROGRAM SAVES 134 JOBS

Through a partnership with the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program, Inc. (EKCEP), Shaping Our Appalachian Region, Inc. helped identify seven communities to receive assistance, via eTeams, to help grow local businesses through the power of broadband. Those communities were Prestonsburg, Pineville/Middlesboro, Morehead, Berea, Hazard, Hyden, and Whitesburg.

Through a POWER grant provided to EKCEP by the Economic Development Agency, companies were trained on the benefits of broadband and acquiring new customers to grow their respective businesses. Partners for the eTeams training included, SOAR, EKCEP, Advantage Kentucky Alliance, Kentucky Small Business Development Centers, Kentucky Innovation Network, Strategic Networks Group, BitSource, and Symbiosis Media Group.

The project is under the direction of Ian Mooers of EKCEP and seeks to identify new markets for business growth, grow manufacturing, and explore their online presence and develop skills in e-commerce, marketing, and social media business practices.





# LYNCH: A TOWN BUILT ON FAITH, GRIT

A century ago, U.S. Steel Corporation bought 19,000 acres around the town of Lynch to open a coal mining operation and community that fueled the industrial revolution across the country. Today, there's a new fuel, or as the 694 locals say, a revival occurring in the small Harlan County Community of Lynch.

Lonnie and Belinda Riley are the humble pastors at the forefront of that transformation. When the Rileys arrived in Lynch in 1998, the locals were skeptical. The evolution of what is now Meridzo Ministries happened slowly, but as Lonnie is quick to remind: "It was in God's time."

The vision the Riley's had was a comprehensive ministry that met the needs of people spiritually and physically. SOAR has helped the Rileys connect with a wide variety of resources, including work to enhance the connectivity of the town. Lonnie and Belinda said organizations, like SOAR, have provided a unified vision of transformation for the region through its Regional Blueprint.

"The thing that sets SOAR apart from other organizations is that they listened to the people," said Lonnie. "SOAR sought the input of people, and they drafted



that into a plan for the future. We have bought into that plan (Regional Blueprint), and know that SOAR is doing some incredible work."

Meridzo Ministries boasts between 40-50 employees at any given time, and their ministry has expanded into Letcher, Floyd and Pulaski counties. "So many people thought it was the end of Lynch," said Lonnie. "I believe it is only the beginning."



**SEED Defense Symposium:** SOAR, Congressman Hal Rogers, and the Southeast Kentucky Economic Development Corporation (SKED) hosted the Supplier Education and Economic Development (SEED) Defense Contracting Symposium in October 2017 at the Corbin Center to help educate local employers about how they can compete for more jobs in Southern and Eastern Kentucky.



### BRAIDY INDUSTRIES TO INVEST \$1.3 BILLION IN MILL

In April 2017, Governor Matt Bevin announced Braidy Industries would build a \$1.3 billion aluminum rolling mill in Boyd and Greenup counties. The project, which will break ground in 2018 at the EastPark industrial site, will create 1,000 construction jobs and 550 permanent highly-skilled jobs.

The announcement demonstrated collaboration across the public and private sector, including Governor Bevin, the Cabinet for Economic Development, the Ashland Alliance, state and local leaders, and private companies like Kentucky Power.

Braidy's rolling mill seeks to become the nation's low-cost producer of high quality auto body sheet aluminum, plate and ultra-high strength alloys for the Aerospace industry. The mill will open with capacity of 370,000 tons per annum, producing series 5000, 6000, and 7000 aluminum sheet and plate products. Braidy is also exploring new scientific nano-crystalline technical advances capable of improving molten metal-based manufacturing.



PROGRAM OF WORK

BLUEPRINT GOALS

The company also plans to work closely with the Kentucky Community and Technical College System to enhance and develop a specialized Associates Degree in Material Sciences and Advanced Manufacturing. The program will be used to train its work force on an evergreen basis while developing a pipeline of human talent for its mill and future manufacturing businesses in the region.

### HAZARD COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE LAUNCHES TELEMEDICINE PROGRAM

The future of healthcare delivery involves telemedicine and Hazard Community and Technical College (HCTC) is training students for that very future with its Telehealth Technician Program.

The program is completed in one semester and contains 16 college credit hours. Graduates earn certificates in Telehealth Technician, Healthcare Foundations, and Nurse Aide, under the instruction of Program Coordinator Shaun Neace. The program graduated its first class in July 2017.

This program was made possible through a Kentucky Appalachian Regional Development (KARD) grant funded by Shaping Our Appalachian Region, Inc.



PROGRAM OF WORK

BLUEPRINT GOALS

(SOAR). The \$250,000 seed money provided HCTC with the means to purchase basic equipment, hire faculty, and develop curricula.

# BITSOURCE: A SOAR-INSPIRED COMPANY

BitSource currently serves more than 40 clients, and has gained national attention for its “Coal to Code” mentality that has taken the transferrable skills of coal miners and turned them into world-class computer coders. A proud partner of Shaping Our Appalachian Region, Inc. (SOAR), BitSource redesigned the SOAR website, and, in 2016, helped create SOAR.network, an innovative platform to allow people and organizations from across the region to share ideas and network with one another.

During the SOAR/MIT Hackathon in 2016 at the Center for Rural Development in Somerset, a group of people thought of a plan to create a mobile application to combat the drug epidemic in Appalachia Kentucky. Those conversations led to the creation of ODSAVE in 2017, an application connecting first responders who can administer naloxone to people who are experiencing an overdose. The application is currently in the beta phase and is being tested in partnership with the City of Pikeville. BitSource will take the product to market in 2018.

Another innovative software solution BitSource has been a part of in 2017 is the Farmacy program in Letcher County. The program is a collaboration of

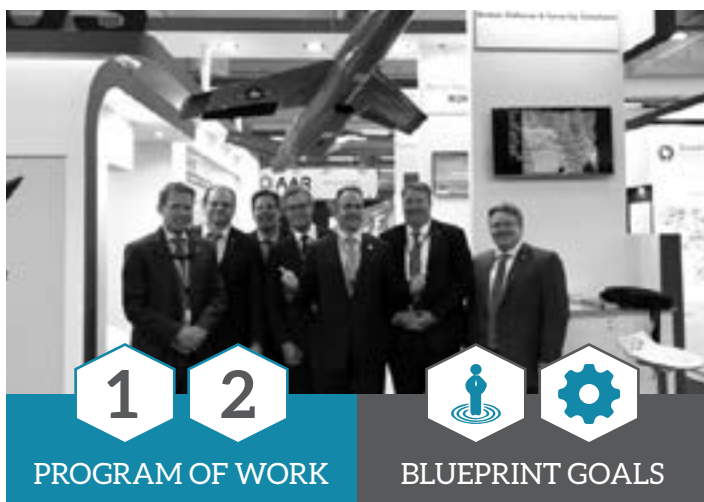


Mountain Comprehensive Health Corporation, Community Farm Alliance, LabCorp, Grow Appalachia, UK Healthcare, Passport Health Plan, Well Care Health Plans, and the Letcher County Farmers Market. The software is aimed to promote healthy lifestyles. BitSource is also working with California tech company SpeedGauge on an app that tracks speeding. It is for the driver's benefit, and the driver is in control. It will enable drivers to track their safety performance, and our expectation is that this will help those drivers land jobs.



**SOAR was a proud sponsor of the Kentucky Innovation Network's 2017 Appalachian New Business Competition:** The competition featured six teams and awarded a \$5,000 prize for first place, \$3,000 for second place, and \$2,000 for third place. K2 Medical won the first-place prize. Lifetime Learner was the second-place winner, and Pikeville Counseling Center finished third.

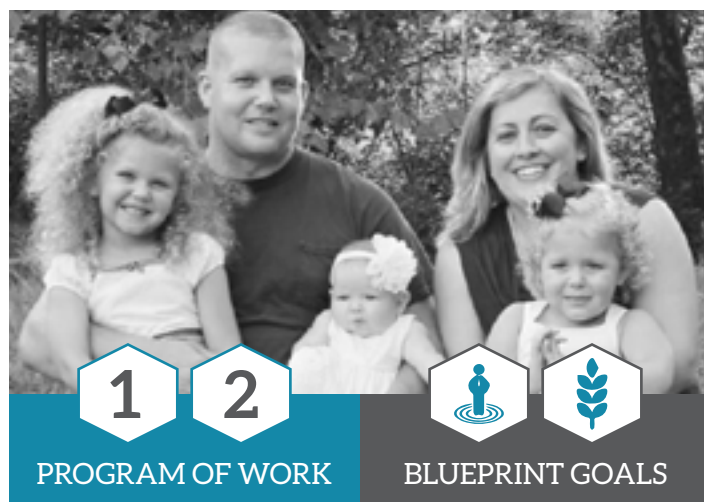
## BLUEPRINT IN ACTION



PROGRAM OF WORK

BLUEPRINT GOALS

**One East Kentucky working to attract new investments:** In 2017, One East Kentucky visited with 110 companies from sixteen states as well as Canada, France, Germany, and Great Britain as part of their recruitment strategy. Over the summer, the organization spearheaded a group that traveled to the Paris Air Show, the world's largest gathering of aerospace executives. These efforts have led to a dramatic increase in the number of companies and potential jobs for the region. In December 2017, OEK's pipeline consists of over 80 companies representing 9,757 potential new jobs and a prospective investment of \$640.5 million.



PROGRAM OF WORK

BLUEPRINT GOALS

**SOAR Small Production Loan Fund assists 52 farms in 25 counties since 2015:** The SOAR Small Production Loan Fund, administered by the Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation, provides low-interest loans to assist small producers in growing healthy and nutritional foods, so they can move into commercial production. The goal of the program is to support and educate growers to develop a strong local food system across the SOAR region that will be market-supported and result in a profit for the growers. Twenty-three loans have been approved in 2017 alone. Griffith Family Farm was one of the recipients.

## SOAR AS THE CHAMPION

SOAR staff hosted, sponsored, or presented at the following events in 2017:

NaCO Conference - Richfield, UT  
 Broadband Communities Summit - Dallas, TX  
 ARC POWER Grantee Summit - Huntington, WV  
 Broadband Workshop - Morehead, KY  
 AWS Cloud Leadership Institute - Washington, DC  
 ARC Power Convening - Washington, DC  
 ARC Health Disparities Roundtable - Johnson City, TN  
 Congressional Staff Visit - Appalachia KY  
 SEED Symposium - Corbin, KY  
 UPIKE Business Competition - Pikeville, KY  
 Joint Interim Legislative Committee - Frankfort, KY  
 SOAR Board Meeting - Manchester, KY  
 Obesity/Diabetes Roundtable - Barbourville, KY  
 MIT Site Visit - Boston, MA

MIT Site Visit - Pikeville, KY  
 Morehead Chamber of Commerce - Morehead, KY  
 Ashland Rotary Club - Ashland, KY  
 Kentucky River ADD - Hazard, KY  
 Downtown Beattyville Alliance - Beattyville, KY  
 Gateway Community Action One Stop Meeting - Morehead, KY  
 CDFA Kentucky Conference - Lexington, KY  
 Filling Kentucky Jobs KET Forum - Lexington, KY  
 AHA Rural Listening Tour - Appalachia KY  
 EntreEd Conference - Charleston, WV  
 Provider Education Workshop - Pikeville, KY  
 TRaD Works Forum - Washington, DC  
 MIT Future of Work Forum - Bowling Green, KY  
 UK Appalachian Studies - Lexington, KY



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Shaping Our Appalachian Region