



NASEO Rural Energy Working Group Quarterly Newsletter December 2024

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Upcoming NASEO Events

- **Virtual: [NASEO Rural Energy Working Group Webinar: Building Capacity and Investing in Rural Communities for Clean Energy Deployment](#)**. January 14, 2024, 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. ET.
 - This webinar will feature presentations from Climate United and the Appalachian Regional Commission about working to build capacity in rural communities and better equip them to access funding for clean energy deployment and increased energy reliability. The speakers will share insights into how states can support this work and best engage key organizations. To register for this event, please click [here](#). State and Territory Energy Offices are encouraged to attend and share this registration link with any constituents or partners who may be interested. Please reach out to Jasmine Xie (jxie@naseo.org) with any questions.

For the latest information about upcoming and past NASEO Rural Energy Working Group events, please visit the [NASEO Rural Energy Working Group Page](#).

In Case You Missed It

- **Virtual: NASEO Rural Energy Working Group Meeting (States, Territories, and Affiliates Only)**. October 28, 2024, 2:00 – 3:15 p.m. ET.
 - NASEO and IEDC's State Clean Energy-Based Economic Development Working Group convened a joint meeting, in partnership with NASEO's Rural Energy Working Group, focused on rural workforce development and supporting clean energy development in rural areas, following an initial workforce discussion in September. The State Clean Energy-Based Economic Development Working Group, jointly facilitated by NASEO and the International Economic Development Council (IEDC), brings together State Energy Offices and state and regional Economic Development Organizations to strategize on common priorities, learn from experts, and share best practices to promote clean energy-related economic development and maximize the potential of federal clean energy investments. Please reach out to

Grace Lowe (glowe@naseo.org) or Arvand Golbazi (agolbazi@naseo.org) if you would like to participate or learn more about the State Clean Energy-Based Economic Development Working Group. The presentation slides can be found [here](#).

Announcements and Opportunities

NASEO is developing a [Program-in-a-Box](#) to compile examples of state programs and policies supporting the deployment of agrivoltaics. Please reach out to Jasmine Xie (jxie@naseo.org) if you have a program example that you would like highlighted.

[Oregon Department of Energy Announces \\$2 Million for Energy Workforce Training](#)

The Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) launched a new [\\$2 million grant program](#) to support training for Oregon's energy workforce. Grant funding will support professional training programs for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning; home energy auditing and modeling; contractor business development; and home energy efficiency upgrades. At least \$800,000 in program funds will be awarded for projects that demonstrate direct benefits to [disadvantaged communities](#) for clean workforce development. ODOE is accepting applications from eligible applicants through January 17, 2025.

[DOE Notice of Funding Opportunity for FY25 Energy Improvements in Rural or Remote Areas](#)

The Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations (OCED) issued a [Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) for up to \$400 million under the Energy Improvements in Rural or Remote Areas (ERA) to deliver measurable and sustained benefits to people who live in rural or remote areas; demonstrate rural or remote energy system approaches; and build clean energy knowledge, capacity, and self-reliance in rural and remote parts of America. Applicants are required to submit concept papers by February 27, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. ET to be eligible to submit a full application.

[American-Made Large Animal and Solar System Operations \(LASSO\) Prize](#)

On September 10, 2024, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO) announced an \$8 million prize that supports pilot and demonstration projects designed to gather and share data on costs, business models, and outcomes associated with cattle agrivoltaics, the co-location of photovoltaics (PV) and cattle grazing operations. Submission materials for Phase One are due March 6, 2025. Multi-stakeholder teams of solar and agricultural experts will work to develop impactful projects that deepen our understanding of cattle agrivoltaics and showcase successful business models that support U.S. decarbonization goals and sustainable land use.

Reports, Information, Tools, News, and Partner Events

[Leading U.S. Coal Producer Developing Solar, Energy Storage at Former Mines](#)

Peabody Energy, a leading U.S. coal producer, is partnering with a major developer of renewable energy projects to put solar energy and battery storage installations on reclaimed mine lands in Illinois and Indiana. The initiative expects to install more than 5.5 GW of solar energy and battery storage capacity across 10 potential projects.

[The Foundational Guide to Energy Opportunities and Economic Growth in Eastern Kentucky](#)

[Shaping Our Appalachian Region \(SOAR\)](#) has developed a foundational guide to summarize local and regional energy projects, as well as the pertinent grant, financing, and other incentive opportunities to revitalize the workforce and economy of Eastern Kentucky.

[USDA Announces Over \\$194 Million In Projects through Rural Partners Network](#)

The USDA is investing over \$194 million in grants and loans for 118 new projects to increase economic opportunities, modernize infrastructure, and transition to clean energy within the [Rural Partners Network](#) (RPN) community networks in Alaska, Arizona, Georgia, Kentucky, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Mexico, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Puerto Rico.

[State Energy Program Supports Free Energy Audits and Grant Assistance to Schools, Local Businesses, and Agricultural Producers in Kansas](#)

This year, the [Kansas Energy Program \(KEP\)](#) received \$600,000 from KCC to support a broad portfolio of projects, including small business energy audits, energy education events, energy benchmarking for K-12 school facilities, and financing for facility capital projects in state-owned government buildings. Between 2016 and 2024, KEP has helped small businesses and farmers secure over \$5.6 million in grant funding with a 97 percent grant approval rate from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's [Rural Energy for America Program](#). For more information or to schedule a free energy assessment, please visit the [Kansas Energy Program website](#).

[Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy Receives \\$307 Million Grant](#)

The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) will use \$307 million from its U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grant allocation to launch *Opportunity for Nebraska: Reducing Emissions and Decarbonization* (ONE RED). Eligible projects include energy efficiency, sustainable agriculture practices, pre-weatherization for critical home repairs for low-income residents, incentives for irrigation well conversion from diesel to electric, solar for critical infrastructure in rural communities, biogas cleaning facilities, and more. To learn more, please [click here](#).

[Mississippi Announced as an Awardee of the Phase Two Energizing Rural Communities Prize](#)

On September 18, 2024, Blue Mountain, Mississippi was announced as [one of 33 communities](#) awarded funding through Phase Two of the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations Energizing Rural Communities Prize. Phase Two funding will help New Albany, Light, Gas, and Water, a local municipal utility, develop and issue a solicitation to conduct a feasibility study for a clean energy microgrid in Blue Mountain, MS. For more information on the project, see the NASEO website [here](#) and the list of other prize winners [here](#).

NASEO wants to highlight your news and success stories! Please share upcoming events, announcements, publications, and relevant news stories, in the next NASEO's Rural Energy Working Group Quarterly Newsletter. More resources and opportunities can be found on NASEO's [Rural Energy Issues](#) page. You may direct any submissions or feedback to Jasmine Xie (jxie@naseo.org).