



# In the Region



A WEEKLY SNAPSHOT OF NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND OTHER  
TIDBITS FROM THE APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION

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## ARC SPOTLIGHT



*Unique wildflowers are the centerpiece of Mercer County's Peak of Bloom celebration.  
The festival is designed to capitalize on the area's cultural and natural assets.*

Photo: [Camp Creek State Park](#)

## Gateway to West Virginia's Peak of the Bloom

Beginning tomorrow, Friday August 16, West Virginia's Mercer County will be welcoming visitors to Peak of Bloom, a ten day festival of concerts, talks, demos, and other activities happening in both Camp Creek's State Park and Princeton's Mercer Street Grassroots District. In addition to celebrating the area's unique wildflower blooms, Peak of the Bloom's intent is to help Mercer County capitalize on its cultural and natural assets and stimulate the local economy.

The idea for Peak of the Bloom was initially developed as a part of the [Appalachian Gateway Community Initiative](#) (AGCI), sponsored by ARC and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), in partnership with The Conservation Fund. Since 2007, AGCI has helped Appalachian "gateway" communities – those that are entry points or adjacent to Appalachia's national and state parks and forests – expand tourism, arts, and other community and economic development opportunities. With programming that has included targeted technical assistance, community tourism assessments, tourism planning workshops, and small grants for project implementation, more than 1,000 communities and 100 counties have been touched by AGCI. Applications are now being accepted for the [2019 Appalachian Gateway Communities Regional Workshop](#), to be held November 5-7, 2019 in Bristol, TN. This 3-day team-based workshop will provide communities with the skills needed to drive sustainable economic development while preserving their unique community character. To be eligible to participate in the workshop, communities must be in an ARC-designated distressed, transitional, or at-risk county. Applications are due September 16.



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## INVESTMENTS IN ACTION

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*When local industry took a hard hit, the town of Gadsden, Alabama turned to downtown revitalization to rehabilitate buildings and recruit business.*

Photo: [City of Gadsden](#)

## "Ready to Recruit" in Alabama

The neighboring towns of Anniston and Gadsden were once among the most important manufacturing towns for iron, steel, and rubber in northeast Alabama. As these industries declined, the local economy took a devastating hit. What did remain in Anniston and Gadsden were many historic buildings ripe for revitalization.

In 2014, both Anniston and Gadsden deployed focused downtown revitalization plans to attract investment, rehab buildings, and recruit businesses. Since then, Anniston has attracted nearly \$4 million in additional investment and netted 17 new businesses. Meanwhile, Gadsden brought in \$8 million in additional investment and 31 new businesses, many started by entrepreneurs returning back home. "I think the economic recession was the single-best thing to happen to Gadsden and other small cities in Alabama," said Jason Wilson, who came back to Gadsden to start Back Forty Beer, a successful brewery. "What happens when you lose your job? You come home. As a result, we ended up with all these entrepreneurs here, and it recharged everything."

With ARC support, [Main Street Alabama](#) is partnering with Downtown Professional Network (DPN) a Tennessee based planning and research firm, to help Anniston and Gadsden prepare for their next phase of strategic mainstreet development. Through a specialized "Ready to Recruit" program, Anniston and Gadsden planners will receive intensive training in market analysis and

business recruitment strategies. They will also develop an action plan and receive ongoing technical assistance to keep development efforts on track and successful. In addition to bringing new business, Anniston and Gadsden expect this training will in turn restore their towns as desirable destinations for working, playing, and staying.



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APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION



## Search Firm Needed

ARC is **seeking proposals** from qualified executive search firms to provide **recruitment services** in selecting an **Inspector General**.

**Proposals Due: August 21, 2019**

 LEARN MORE: [www.arc.gov](http://www.arc.gov)

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## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

### Join Our Team!

ARC is recruiting for a number positions, including a **Content Writer, Program Support Assistant and Program Analyst [Infrastructure]**.

The [Content Writer](#) will serve as ARC's lead writer and editor, working with the communications team to tell compelling stories through press releases, web materials, newsletters, speeches and other materials amplifying ARC's mission and efforts.

The [Program Support Assistant](#), a federal position, will coordinate a variety of administrative and programmatic functions and act as a central point of contact for the Office of the Federal Co-Chair.

The [Program Analyst \[Infrastructure\]](#) will manage federal grants and provide technical assistance to communities and potential grant applicants on strategic infrastructure-related investments.

For more information on this position, visit [www.arc.gov/careers](http://www.arc.gov/careers).

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## APPALACHIA IN THE NEWS

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[Quality of life, affordability bring young people back to Somerset](#), *Daily American*, Somerset, Pennsylvania

[Federal funding earmarked for stem programs in Milford Central Schools](#), *CNY News*, Oneonta, New York

[Collins Career Center to offer heavy equipment program](#), *Herald-Dispatch*, Huntington, West Virginia

[To boost workforce, medical schools try to sell rural life](#), *ABC News*

[To Protect a Critical Forest in Appalachia, a Foundation Goes Beyond Grantmaking](#), *Inside Philanthropy*

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

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### Appalachia Strong: An ARC Summit

Asheville, North Carolina  
September 4 - 6

### 2019 National HBCU Week Conference

Washington, D.C.  
September 8 - 10

### Federal Student Aid Partner Summit - Appalachian Region

*If interested, please email [maisha.challenger@ed.gov](mailto:maisha.challenger@ed.gov)*

Morehead, Kentucky  
September 26

### Alabama-Mississippi Rural Tourism Conference

Natchez, Mississippi  
October 21 - 23

## Appalachian Gateway Communities Regional Workshop

Bristol, Tennessee

November 5 - 7

*The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is an economic development agency of the federal government and 13 state governments focusing on 420 counties across the Appalachian Region. ARC's mission is to innovate, partner, and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth in Appalachia to help the Region achieve socioeconomic parity with the nation.*



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