

Collective Voices for Appalachia

2021 Op-Ed Exchange



Introduction

Since 1965, the Appalachian Regional Commission has served as a shining example of ways federal, state and local stakeholders can work together to spur regional economic growth. Since its inception, ARC has invested \$4.5 billion in approximately 28,000 economic development projects across Appalachia, attracting over \$10 billion in matching project funds. ARC's nimble structure and flexibility allows the Commission to responsively meet the region's economic needs as they evolve over time. More importantly, ARC embodies the fact that Americans work best by working together.

In the spirit of collaboration and bipartisanship, ARC 2021 States' Co-Chair, Virginia Governor Ralph Northam, asked all ARC governors and the ARC Federal Co-Chair to participate in an opinion editorial exchange to share their vision for the future of Appalachia and highlight how ARC's unique partnership model has benefited the region. With over 30 different newspapers in all 13 states running the op-eds weekly from the first week of July 2021 through the first week of October 2021, the work of ARC and the region has been on full display leading up to the annual conference and the release of ARC's new strategic plan.

Governors shared innovative stories of how targeted investments and local and regional leadership are moving Appalachia forward. Many highlighted similar issues facing the region: broadband access, health care, infrastructure and workforce development. Irrespective of political party, the 13 governors proudly touted their administration's accomplishments on taking on these defining challenges and working to make Appalachia a stronger region.

Appalachia's Governors express a deep and pervasive sense of optimism about the future of the region and the spirit of collaboration in their writing.

Appalachia has certainly faced its share of challenges and solving them won't be an overnight endeavor, but decades of sustained investment and the hard work of communities from New York to Mississippi have made Appalachia an alluring place to work, play and raise a family.

Federal Co-Chair Manchin and States' Co-Chair Governor Northam thank the Governors, gubernatorial staff, ARC program managers and the media outlets for participating in this novel public dialogue. The op-ed exchange has created hope for the continued cooperation that defines the success of the region. We hope you feel the same.



Appalachia is made up of 420 counties across 13 states and spans 205,000 square miles, from southern New York to northern Mississippi. The Region's 25 million residents live in parts of Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia, and all of West Virginia.

The ARC Op-Ed Exchange Included

14 Unique Articles

Representing

13 States

Published in

34 News Outlets

Resulting in

144 Articles

APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION

Federal Co-Chair Gayle C. Manchin

Since 1965, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) has collaborated with local and state partners to transform communities, create jobs, and strengthen the regional economy. Since becoming the ARC Federal Co-Chair in May, I take seriously my responsibility to work collaboratively with ARC's 13-member governors, their state alternates and program managers, and a network of local development districts to continue fostering economic growth throughout Appalachia.

I've had the pleasure of meeting with stakeholders across the region, and will continue these visits moving forward. They've shared what's working in their communities, what challenges they continue to face, as well as their concerns and hopes for the future. One thing has become evident as I've continued these conversations—we have many more commonalities than differences.



In our Appalachian region, the issue has always been equity. We all want to level the playing field so Appalachia can succeed; we want the same opportunities as mainstream America. That starts with building a strong workforce through education and training, improving infrastructure, making investments in leadership, and creating an environment where entrepreneurs can succeed.

ARC's investments have moved the region forward over a number of decades. It began by building a highway system through the mountain range, which opened this region to a new era of growth. The regional poverty rate has been cut by more than half. Additionally, the number of high-poverty counties has been cut by more than 60 percent. In counties that received ARC investments, employment increased at a 4.2 percent faster pace, and per capita income increased at a 5.5 percent faster pace, than in similar counties that did not receive ARC investments. In addition, the percentage of adults in the region with a high school diploma has nearly tripled since 1960, and students in Appalachia now graduate from high school at nearly the same rate as the national average.

While we recognize these accomplishments, we still have work to do. There are still highways to finish to better connect our states. The other "highway" system critical to our residents and businesses is the reliable, high-speed "broadband highway." Job creation is not increasing at the same rate as the rest of the country, due in part to this

factor. In addition, the nation's substance use disorder crisis continues to disproportionately impact Appalachia. Even with the many grants made across the Appalachian region, roughly 20 percent of the region's population is not served by a community water system, which again accentuates the disparity of our most distressed counties.

The enduring news is that Appalachian people are strong, resilient and always up for a challenge. As a result, ARC has tremendous support from local, state and national leaders who realize we stand by our word and our values, just as the people do. The support we have is a result of decades of commitment to the region—and most importantly—measurable and demonstrated progress through our investments. Borrowing from a quote I heard recently “We’ve built trust thimbleful by thimbleful,” and we don’t take that lightly.

Because ARC believes Appalachians know their communities best, we asked residents to be a part of our strategic planning process to guide investments over the next 5 years. After input from more than 1,500 residents through community conversations, focus groups, and a public survey, we’re proud to outline our latest strategic investment goals:

- 1. Building Appalachian Businesses:** Strengthen and diversify the region's economy through inclusive economic development strategies and investments in entrepreneurship and business development.
- 2. Building Appalachia's Workforce Ecosystem:** Expand and strengthen community systems (education, healthcare, housing, childcare, and others) that help Appalachians obtain a job, stay on the job, and advance along a financially sustaining career pathway.
- 3. Building Appalachia's Infrastructure:** Ensure that the residents and businesses of Appalachia have access to reliable and affordable utilities and infrastructure in order to successfully live and work in the Region.
- 4. Building Regional Culture and Tourism:** Strengthen Appalachia's community and economic development potential by preserving and investing in the region's local, cultural heritage, and natural assets.
- 5. Building Community Leaders and Capacity:** Invest in the capacity of local leaders, organizations, and communities to address local challenges by providing technical assistance and support to access resources, engage partners, identify strategies and tactics, and conduct effective planning and project execution.

Successfully implementing our strategic plan is entirely dependent on the collaboration, cooperation, and commitment of the state and local leaders across our 420-county region. We are convinced that the more we can work across our county and state boundaries, the more likely we are to raise the quality of life across the entire Appalachian Region.

As John F. Kennedy said in his famous speech at Charleston, West Virginia, in 1960: “No community is an island, cut off from the rest of America. What happens in West Virginia happens to all of us.”

The same concept applies to all 420 counties spread throughout the 13 states in Appalachia. Every American should care about the economic health of our region because when Appalachia succeeds, our entire country succeeds.

—Federal Co-Chair Gayle C. Manchin

VIRGINIA

2021 ARC States' Co-Chair Ralph Northam

Since 1965, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) has been dedicated to improving the economic health of Appalachia. Over \$4.5 billion has been invested, from small business assistance to broadband deployment to workforce development. The key to ARC's success comes from the agency's guiding principle of collaboration and cooperation—between the 13 Appalachian states of the region, between the federal-state-local governments, and across political party lines. Each ARC governor sits on the Commission, and I am honored to serve as ARC state Co-Chair for 2021.

In the spirit of collaboration and bipartisanship, I have asked all 13 ARC governors and ARC federal Co-Chair Gayle Conelly Manchin to participate in an opinion editorial exchange. Starting now through the first week of October, 34 newspapers from New York to Mississippi will run a different governor's opinion editorial weekly. I hope that this public exchange of ideas will help facilitate cross-government collaboration, raise the profile of the ARC, and demonstrate that communities—despite geographic and political differences—are facing similar challenges and implementing innovative solutions.

ARC's collaborative approach is successful because it mirrors the can-do attitude and partnership-building of the people who call Appalachia home. When portions of Appalachia were being left in the dark in the 1930s, communities throughout the ARC footprint formed cooperatives and electrified their homes. As some traditional industries have declined in the region, Appalachia faces a decisive crossroad to determine its future. In Virginia, we have taken the approach of building on the region's unique assets—a strong education system, a talented workforce, unique advantages in agriculture, energy and manufacturing, low cost of living, one-of-a-kind culture, unmatched natural beauty and outdoor recreation, and vibrant downtowns and rural communities filled with new economic opportunities.



Every step of the way, ARC has been a critical partner in our effort. The renaissance of St. Paul, a small town nestled in the mountains and straddled by the Clinch River, is a great example of the impact ARC can have in partnership with a vibrant and visionary set of local and regional private and public sector leaders.

St. Paul leveraged the town's proximity to beautiful mountains and the Clinch River, one of the most biodiverse rivers in the Northern Hemisphere, to create new opportunities for outdoor recreation. The Spearhead Trails, a network of trails for hiking, biking, horseback riding, all-terrain vehicles, and much more, were created with local and state investment, and seed funding from ARC. Eight years since opening, Spearhead offers 600 miles of trails and sells approximately 10,000 permits annually.

With the increase of tourism, St. Paul invested in world class accommodations in town. The Western Front Hotel is a boutique, 30 room hotel that launched in 2016 with the help of a \$500,000 grant from ARC. The project rehabbed a vacant, century-old building in the heart of downtown and has since created a quality hotel that rivals boutique hotels anywhere in the world. Both Spearhead Trails and the Western Front have been a catalyst for private investment, such as a new brewery downtown and a private rafting business on the Clinch River.

Virginia will be hosting the annual ARC conference at the Western Front Hotel in Saint Paul on October 4-5. We look forward to showing off the region's amenities. The conference will be a chance for ARC Governors, their staff, and ARC staff to convene and develop a strategic plan that will guide the agency for the coming decade.

This is just one specific example of the strength of ARC and the region. Virginia, ARC, and regional collaboration have brought transformational investments in broadband, infrastructure, substance abuse response efforts, child care, workforce, cultural heritage—such as the world-renowned Crooked Road – Virginia's Music Heritage Trail—and so much more.

I am optimistic about the future of Appalachia, and you should be too. I see a region with unlimited potential and unmatched natural beauty, brimming with decent, resilient people who never shy away from extending a helping hand. Solving the challenges Appalachia faces will take more than funding. It will take hard work, something the folks of our region are not lacking in. It will take the same ingenuity that has fueled the rebound of St. Paul and so many other communities like it. Most importantly, it will take collaboration and cooperation. I am excited to hear from Appalachia's governors throughout the next three months and continue our work together to bettering Appalachia.

—Governor Ralph Northam

ALABAMA

Governor Kay Ivey

The hit country song “Mountain Music” by the band Alabama may recount fond memories of many Alabamians growing up in a rural mountainous area where life is simple and family bonds are strong.

“Oh, play me some mountain music; Like grandma and grandpa used to play.”

While a similar image may be the first thing that comes to mind when most of America thinks of the Appalachian region, we who live in states that are part of the region think not only of its rich cultural heritage and deep sense of family roots, but also its tremendous potential.

A key partnership in helping the region reach that potential is the Appalachian Regional Commission. Formed in 1965, the ARC is a federal-state-local partnership to enhance economic development and improve the quality of life in 13 states, including 37 counties in Alabama.

The ARC has been a strong partner to my state, Alabama. In 2020 alone, the ARC invested \$6.8 million to support 35 projects in Alabama communities. Multiplying the projects across the other 12 states in the region gives an idea of the partnership's total yearly impact.

Some of my key priorities as Alabama's governor are infrastructure, education, health care and job creation. A key item to expanding opportunities in those areas, especially in rural Alabama, is high-speed internet. Access to broadband service today is quickly becoming much like access to electricity was in Appalachia during the early- to mid-20th century. It is growing more important for education, economic development, health care and many other areas.

As we partner and collaborate in the public and private sectors to expand broadband to previously unserved areas, the ARC has been a valuable partner. Recently, ARC funds of \$200,000 to Central Alabama Electric



Cooperative helped expand broadband access to almost 70 homes in Coosa County, a rural county in east-central Alabama. While the overall number of households might not be huge, access to broadband will bring a world of possibilities to the doors of these residents including improved health care, access to distance learning and business opportunities while laying the foundation for further expansion to other households and businesses.

There is perhaps nothing more life-changing than gaining the training needed not just for a job but to start a productive career. The ARC also helps its member states offer training to prepare residents for productive careers in growing industries.

An area of growing opportunity in Alabama's Appalachian region is aerospace and aviation with the booming Huntsville and Redstone Arsenal areas nearby. Snead State Community College, in northeast Alabama, is using an ARC grant of \$111,395 to offer a training program to help north Alabama residents prepare for aviation jobs. The grant helped Snead State purchase the updated technology and equipment needed to offer the training needed for certification as Federal Aviation Administration Aviation Technician at the Aviation College in the city of Albertville. This certification is a valuable credential that can lead to jobs with government and military agencies, contractors and airlines. With support of the ARC grant, Snead State is providing the program on modern equipment that is the industry standard and will serve students well as they receive the training for careers in the growing industry.

As in the song "Mountain Music," the Appalachian region will always stir fond memories of a simple, rural life. The ARC is helping to build on that framework as the region continues to grow into its full, modern potential. As all Appalachian states work toward a bright future filled with opportunity for our residents, the ARC will continue to be a valuable partner to each of the 13 states in its footprint.

—Governor Kay Ivey

GEORGIA

Governor Brian Kemp

As a member state of the Appalachian Regional Commission, Georgia has effectively used federal funds to make strategic investments in projects to assist communities, support business development and job creation, and improve economic opportunities for hardworking Georgians in the Appalachian region.

The 37 counties of North Georgia are all part of the ARC footprint. We are proud to have some of the best trout fishing east of the Mississippi, thousands of acres of state and national forests, and farmland that feeds all of America.

We've used ARC funds to help local governments and development authorities create industrial parks that have become home to a weaving business in Lavonia, a Nissan brake facility in Walker County, and the Hanwha Q CELLS factory in Dalton. Our ARC investments have provided the opportunity for industry to create thousands of jobs in the region and grow local economies.



ARC funds also allow us to help rural counties with economic development planning so they can recruit new or existing industries that fit their community's needs. The state has utilized ARC funds to help downtown areas plan for and implement changes to assist small businesses and create new jobs. In Rockmart, the state is helping the local community take advantage of the Silver Comet Trail by assisting with the construction of an amphitheater and event facility. Similarly, in Hartwell, ARC funds were allocated to implement stormwater redirection so the city can continue to grow its thriving downtown arts district.

Additionally, ARC has provided funding for the city of Rome to upgrade infrastructure in its Federal Opportunity Zone, which will allow the city to market itself as an attractive investment option for businesses and individuals. I'm thankful to former Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson, as well as Sen. Tim Scott, R-S.C., for leading efforts to implement opportunity zones across the country. Opportunity

zones have proven to make economic prosperity a reality for distressed areas across Georgia and the United States.

Access to a quality education and affordable health care are key to the future prosperity of Georgia's rural communities. That's why the Department of Community Affairs directed ARC funds to invest in telecommunications upgrades in the Elbert Memorial Hospital so residents could access care via telehealth, rather than making time-consuming and costly trips to Athens or even South Carolina. In Polk County, the state invested in One Door Polk, helping finance a dental clinic that served more than 3,000 patients who previously had no access to dental care in its first year.

ARC also worked with the Gainesville-Hall Development Authority to create an apprenticeship program that helped current employees of small manufacturers gain on-the-job training and advanced certifications. These apprenticeships helped employees achieve greater earning power, while helping small businesses improve their efficiency and upgrade their product lines.

As the top state for business for a record-breaking eighth straight year, it is vital for opportunity and economic prosperity to reach all corners of Georgia, not just metro Atlanta. These targeted ARC investments allow the state and rural communities to attract private investment dollars to small towns and counties where capital investment and development projects can make a significant, positive impact on their future.

Georgia is a proud member state of the Appalachian Regional Commission, and we will continue to invest ARC funds wisely to ensure Georgia remains the best place to live, work, and raise a family.

—Governor Brian Kemp

KENTUCKY

Governor Andy Beshear

Kentucky's economy is on fire, with economic momentum in every corner of the commonwealth. One region with potential we can't ignore is Eastern Kentucky, specifically in our Appalachian counties. With investments in industries like agritech and manufacturing, strong fiscal management and upgrades to critical infrastructure, Eastern Kentucky is ready to soar.

Each week, we are announcing new jobs, with companies expanding or locating new facilities in this region. Since I took office, we've announced 67 projects totaling nearly \$959 million in new investments and creating more than 3,000 full-time jobs in Eastern Kentucky alone. Even amid the global pandemic, we've kept our eye on the ball and found ways to make progress, with companies including AppHarvest and Firestone Industrial Products expanding in the region, creating hundreds of jobs each.



One reason we are seeing growth in Eastern Kentucky is because our administration prioritizes opportunities that include good-paying jobs, strong education systems and affordable health care in every part of Kentucky. We are also making progress thanks to the investments and partnership from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). Since the 1960s, ARC has worked to create prosperity in every community in the Appalachian region, which includes 54 of Kentucky's counties.

These investments have created progress. In Perry County, ARC invested \$1 million for an expansion at Dajcor Aluminum, which will help expand operations, add a product line and create an additional 50 jobs.

We're seeing opportunities like this throughout the region. In 2020, the ARC invested \$42.3 million into 65 projects in Eastern Kentucky, the largest single-state investment in decades. We expect the projects to attract an additional \$121.5 million in leveraged private investments, create or retain more than 2,300 jobs, educate nearly 3,500 students and workers and benefit 1.2 million Kentuckians.

I believe we continue this momentum and build a stronger Appalachian region by investing in infrastructure—from our roads and bridges to water and wastewater infrastructure. Our administration has key ways we're tackling this mission.

Thanks to a bipartisan agreement with the Kentucky legislature, my Better Kentucky Plan invests more than \$750 million to build schools, expand broadband access and provide clean drinking water and quality sewer systems across Kentucky, creating 14,500 jobs. Aligned with this mission, the ARC also highly prioritizes investment in critical infrastructure like water and wastewater systems, as well as key roadways identified as vital for economic progress, coined the Appalachian Development Highway System.

One major, barrier-breaking project supported by the ARC in recent months is a \$1.5 million investment in the City of Paintsville to increase the capacity of a major wastewater treatment plant. When we think about economic development, we don't always think about water and wastewater treatment plants. However, if those reach capacity, companies cannot invest and expand, making modern water and sewer infrastructure a vital prerequisite for economic investment.

Equally important to support the economy of the future are our roads.

Our administration understands the topography of Appalachia has often been considered an obstacle for quick transportation, whether that be for shipping goods or for connecting our citizens to vital services like health care. In Eastern Kentucky we've made great progress with the Mountain Parkway, which the ARC recognizes as a priority corridor. Now with half of the project complete, the 46-mile expansion will be the final, finishing link in creating a 400-mile-long, four-lane, high-speed corridor from Paducah in Western Kentucky to Pikeville in Eastern Kentucky.

When I ran for Governor, I made a commitment to focus on transportation infrastructure. Improved safety and mobility is vitally important for tourism, economic development and overall quality of life for the people who are proud to call Eastern Kentucky home.

Modernizing infrastructure and building the economy of the future aren't just buzz words or talking points, but are the way we create sustained growth, opportunity and better lives for our families. I want to encourage all 13 Appalachian states to continue working together to build a stronger future for our people. One that includes good-paying jobs, quality, accessible health care and a world-class education system in every community. That's not a red or a blue issue, it's about doing the right thing for all of us. Let's get this work done, together.

—Governor Andy Beshear

MARYLAND

Governor Larry Hogan

Since taking office in 2015, our administration has charted a new course, one guided by simple, common sense principles. Our focus has been on creating jobs, assisting Maryland's families, and restoring our economy.

As Maryland continues to recover from the unprecedented crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we remain focused on creating greater economic opportunity for all in our state, including Marylanders in Appalachian counties.

We understand the unique challenges of economic development and job creation in Appalachian Maryland, but we also see unique opportunities. The grit and determination of the people, the rich natural resources, and the strong cultural heritage all provide a strong foundation for success.

We are particularly focused on new approaches to remove barriers, leverage partnerships, and expand critical infrastructure to meet the needs of the 21st century for economic growth, job creation, and education throughout the region. During a time of unique challenges, we are utilizing partnerships and innovation to change the narrative and make a difference.

There are currently 12 federally-designated Opportunity Zones in Appalachian Maryland. Opportunity Zones are a community investment tool that encourages long-term investment in low income urban and rural communities. Maryland has expanded the initiative with additional tax credits and incentive programs to bring jobs and businesses to these designated zones.

A skilled workforce is essential to attracting private sector investment. One of our top priorities is the development of a highly competent and well-educated workforce. Our administration has provided a blueprint for an effective and efficient workforce system across the state, focused on collaboration among state agencies, effectively leveraging resources, and providing opportunity for all jobseekers, including a new generation of workers through education and apprenticeships.



To further bolster workforce development in the region, we funded a new focus area at Frostburg State University (FSU), which established an Office of Regional Development and Engagement. The new office integrates university resources with regional partners in Appalachian Maryland to meet the challenges of economic and community development while creating jobs and apprenticeships.

Our higher education institutions continue to focus on the importance of technology and have worked with state and local governments to meet the educational needs of a 21st century workforce. Colleges are sharing this infrastructure with K-12 schools to create greater opportunities for advanced learning, including the formation of magnet schools, active learning labs, and STEM and robotics programming.

We are also turning challenges into opportunities with support for asset-based development around outdoor recreation opportunities across the region. Appalachian Maryland offers four seasons of family-friendly activities including skiing, boating, biking, fishing, and hiking. We have seen growth and development of tourism-related businesses with a positive impact from recreational, historical, and heritage attractions, and we will continue to support these important initiatives.

Infrastructure is fundamental to our economy, environment, and way of life. Maryland is focused on addressing infrastructure needs across our entire state with an appreciation of the unique needs and challenges of Appalachian Maryland. Innovation and collaboration will bring the best ideas and solutions to meet these needs.

We joined forces with local partners on the Western Maryland fiber project, and we continue to work together to expand broadband across our entire state. We are investing in local water and sewer systems to improve systems and also increase capacity to sustain commercial and industrial development along the I-68 corridor in Appalachian Maryland. And of course, our focus on infrastructure includes transportation improvements across the region.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we remained committed to combating the opioid and substance use disorder crisis, which has affected far too many families and taken far too many lives. We have brought together state and local partners to support prevention, treatment, and enforcement efforts combating the heroin and opioid crisis across our state, and will continue to focus on this too-often unseen epidemic.

We understand the need to fill the gaps of the full recovery ecosystem—clinical care, access to employment, housing, and transportation—knowing all are essential to empower those struggling with a substance use disorder. We are pleased to join with partners in the public and private sector to invest in projects supporting recovery and workforce development.

We support the mission of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) to innovate, partner, and invest. We continue to work with local leaders, strengthen partnerships, and target resources to capitalize on the opportunity of the Appalachian region to bring jobs, aid struggling Maryland families, and restore our economy.

—Governor Larry Hogan

MISSISSIPPI

Governor Tate Reeves

Mississippians are hardworking and constantly seeking opportunities to better themselves, their families, and their communities. That's why on the day I was sworn in as the 65th Governor of Mississippi, I made a commitment to increase economic development, improve infrastructure, and invest in workforce training. One of my priorities has always been, and will always be, making Mississippi the best state in the nation to live, work, and raise a family.

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) has been a critical partner in helping to reach these goals and provides a unique partnership opportunity for Mississippi.

In 2020, Mississippi saw approximately \$1.9 billion in capital investment, more than double the previous 10 year's average of \$900 million per year. Also in 2020, ARC invested \$3.7 million, supported 19 projects, leveraged an additional \$5.8 million in private investments, created or retained 1,160 jobs, and helped to train 225 students and workers in our state. Their impact has been huge.



As ARC moves forward with a new Strategic Plan, Mississippi is ready to double-down on securing better and higher-paying jobs, providing a trained workforce, securing property that is ready for private investment and job creation, and preparing communities within the Appalachian Region for growth.

My administration is working tirelessly to prepare Mississippians for the jobs of the next 50 years. Working with our community colleges and other partners, we are focusing on training the next generation of Mississippians so when they complete their college education, they will have access to a good paying job right here at home.

As a result of ARC funding, Northeast Mississippi Community College (NEMCC) was able to purchase medical equipment and supplies to outfit a hands-on training science laboratory located at NEMCC's

Ripley campus. The instructional equipment and supplies for the science lab will help NEMCC provide a cooperative learning environment for students, so they are better prepared for additional post-secondary education and/or high-technology careers in the medical and healthcare field. In addition to credit course offerings for students, this investment by ARC allows NEMCC to offer non-credit instruction to individuals seeking new skills for higher wages in the medical and healthcare sector, and to incumbent workers in the field seeking to enhance their skills and improve current job prospects and salary. Giving Mississippians the tools they need to earn higher wages and find better paying jobs is something I am honored to be a part of.

A state is only as successful as its workforce, which is why it is of the utmost importance that we invest in our people to ensure they are prepared to take on the jobs of the future.

In training our people and preparing our communities for growth, we must provide them with a reliable infrastructure to attract businesses and increase job opportunities. We can do this by providing communities the tools they need through infrastructure grants.

My administration and ARC are committed to better positioning communities for success and growth. In Marshall County using ARC funds, we've invested in water, sewer, and site improvements to assist in the creation of over 2,000 new jobs that paid over the average county salary.

My administration approved ARC funding that will allow Marshall County to rebuild a one-mile stretch of Barringer Road to support industrial growth in the Chickasaw Trail Industrial Park. Two private industrial firms also have plans to build a total of 8 buildings on Barringer Road that are expected to employ 1,200 people.

These projects are just a few examples of how Mississippi's partnerships with ARC allow communities to leverage their assets for growth and attract higher paying jobs.

The work done by my administration and ARC has helped create a multitude of new opportunities for hard-working Mississippians while also boosting the state's economy. Despite the challenges brought on by COVID-19, we made incredible progress growing our economy, preparing our workforce, and taking the necessary steps to bring more jobs to Mississippi. I am incredibly proud of our partnership with ARC and our joint accomplishments.

When we invest in our people and our communities, Mississippi continues to become a premier destination for companies to invest, which means that Mississippi can and will compete with the best this nation has to offer.

—Governor Tate Reeves

NEW YORK

Governor Kathy Hochul

New York's Southern Tier region is part of the rich, geographically diverse fabric that makes up New York State. It is home to highly sought-after educational institutions, a mix of innovative industries, more than 5,300 farms and nearly 5 million acres of forestland that contribute to climate mitigation and the State's \$22 billion forest industry. The largely rural Southern Tier has been experiencing a resurgence over the past several years – a resurgence that has been fueled in part by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC).

The ARC was established in 1965 to help stimulate rural economies across the 13 states that stretch along the Appalachian region from the northern parts of Alabama and Mississippi to the Southern Tier of New York. New York's ARC region, comprised of 14 counties largely in the Southern Tier, stretches from the Catskills to the Great Lakes. It represents 20% of the state's geography but only 6% of the state's population.



Over the past decade, New York's ARC Program has awarded more than \$36 million in ARC-sponsored grants for Area Development and Local Development District operations, as well as other ARC-related initiatives. It has helped to address the region's shortage of health care professionals, to foster regional tourism, to encourage students and teachers to engage in STEM programs, and to abate the insidious crisis of substance use disorder.

As we continue our efforts to combat the impacts of COVID-19 and rebuild New York, ARC will continue to make a difference across the region by bolstering our bold agenda.

New York State will continue to lead as the green energy capital of the nation through the ambitious goals we have set as part of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. ARC's Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) Initiative will help us build a bold

green economy. The program will offer grants to create a more vibrant economic future for coal-impacted communities by cultivating economic diversity, enhancing job training and re-employment opportunities, creating jobs in existing or new industries, and attracting new sources of investment.

New York is also working to ensure universal broadband access for all, especially in our rural areas. We learned through the pandemic that the key to success is about access, which today is attainable through broadband and the Internet. We will continue efforts to establish the first-in-the-nation requirement for affordable Internet for qualifying low-income families. As part of its broader goals, New York's ARC Program is also focused on supporting projects to facilitate the expansion of internet and broadband access.

Responding to COVID while increasing community connectivity is not done in a silo. We will only be successful through the continued cooperation of federal, state and local government and private industry. The ARC supports Local Development Districts that work tirelessly to strengthen regionalism in planning to ensure that economic opportunity reaches all parts of New York State. The ARC program has been instrumental in upstate revitalization initiatives, including supporting downtown revitalization initiatives in several cities and towns to bring new business across the state's ARC region.

A perfect example of the ARC's impact is illustrated in the revitalization of Watkins Glen, which first received an ARC grant in 2004 to develop a Business District Improvement Strategy and then in 2009 for a Lakefront Management and Development Plan for Schuyler County. These investments and strategies laid the groundwork, which led to \$2.4 million in state investments through the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. This ultimately culminated in Watkins Glen being awarded with \$10 million of New York's Downtown Revitalization Initiative funds to accelerate the village's economic resurgence.

As we look to the post-COVID world here in the Southern Tier, we are aiming high and dreaming big with a vision for a green economy and access for all. The ARC is an integral part of bringing this vision to life. I look forward to building a better future for this region of New York State and working together with our partners to make the ARC a vehicle to bring resources and prosperity to this region.

—Governor Kathy Hochul

NORTH CAROLINA

Governor Roy Cooper

With a low cost and high quality of living, it's no surprise that more than 1.7 million North Carolinians call the Appalachia home. The 29 North Carolina counties that are a part of it offer great opportunities to families living in the region—welcoming communities, a strong small business environment and an abundance of outdoor activities and natural resources. But they also face unique challenges. The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is dedicated to addressing Appalachia's challenges and boosting its strengths so these rural communities can thrive.

As the former ARC Co-Chair, I've seen firsthand how this bipartisan coalition among Governors and the federal government has worked together to improve people's lives in all 13 states that make up this region. I am proud of the investments that the Commission has made in our communities, and as our country moves past the pandemic toward its next chapter, it's as important as ever that we continue our collaborative efforts to support the people of Appalachia.



As more businesses choose to grow in North Carolina each week, it's clear that our state is emerging from this pandemic even stronger than before. I'm committed to ensuring that all communities can share in our successes. As Governor, one of my top priorities has been to provide North Carolinians the quality education and training they need to succeed in the jobs of today and tomorrow.

In 2018, I launched the NC Job Ready initiative that connects people with employers to give them a taste of the careers they can pursue in their communities. As part of that initiative, our ARC team working in North Carolina has collaborated with local organizations to increase the knowledge and skills of North Carolina's Appalachian residents, including teaching middle and high school students about the exciting job opportunities waiting for them in science, technology, engineering and advanced manufacturing fields across Western North Carolina.

When we invest in our workforce development pipeline, everybody succeeds. Students enter the workforce with the skills they need to pursue good-paying, fulfilling jobs, and business owners—both homegrown and new—can be confident that our rural communities have the strong workforce they need to build a future here.

Getting people ready for jobs isn't just good for our economy—it benefits the health of our communities. With the opioid crisis hurting our rural areas, one of my main focuses as the 2019 ARC Co-Chair was working with communities on how to reduce overdoses and substance use. Through listening sessions with local business leaders, we heard about the importance of employment to successful recovery outcomes. Having a job not only provides economic stability but it also can provide a sense of fulfillment and a network of support for people in recovery.

But to ensure that everyone can get the resources they need to get a job, learn, start a business and stay healthy, we need to expand high-speed internet access into every home and school. This pandemic has highlighted what many of us already knew—the internet is no longer a luxury. It's a necessity.

Our state agencies have worked with the ARC to provide grants that identify the gaps, challenges and opportunities in Western North Carolina's broadband infrastructure. Hometown Strong, our initiative dedicated to strengthening our rural communities, and our Department of Information Technology are working every day to find ways to make it easier to access and use high-speed internet so North Carolinians in our rural counties can fully participate in our increasingly digital society. One example of their partnership with ARC is the development of a robust digital inclusion program to ensure that workers, vulnerable populations and disadvantaged groups in North Carolina's ARC region of Macon, Madison and Mitchell counties have access to healthcare and economic opportunities.

Through the ARC, Governors are putting partisan differences aside to find practical solutions for Appalachia's challenges while maintaining the natural and cultural resources that make this region so unique.

By coming together to share ideas and learn from each other, we can make our Appalachian communities stronger, healthier and more equitable for everybody.

Let's keep working together.

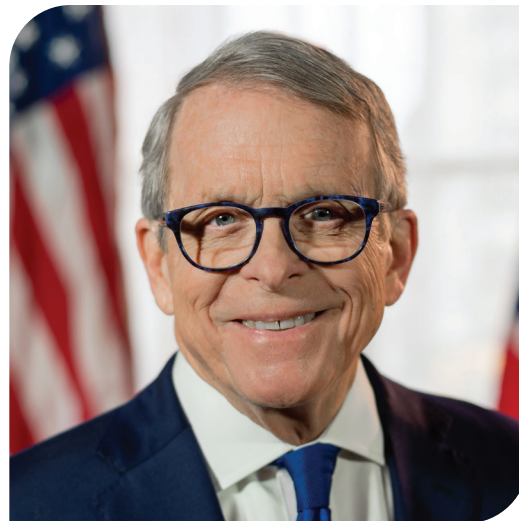
—Governor Roy Cooper

OHIO

Governor Mike DeWine

The Appalachian region of Ohio is diverse in both its landscapes and people. The 32 Ohio counties that make up Appalachian Ohio have terrain perfect for hiking and biking, beautiful waterways for boating or fishing, and even sandy beaches on our northern coast in Ashtabula. My wife Fran and I just spent a few days in part of the region with our family and enjoyed many activities, including outdoor opportunities at Lake Hope in McArthur, a performance of Tecumseh at Sugarloaf Mountain Theater in Chillicothe, and a tour of historic Buckeye Furnace in Wellston.

Appalachian Ohio has produced great innovators and has helped spur development with worldwide impact. Take a trip to Appalachian Ohio and you can find the childhood home of astronaut John Glenn. You also can see Global Cooling, a company that is providing deep freezer technology to help store the COVID-19 vaccine across the country and around the globe. Appalachian Ohio has world-class higher education institutions, abundant recreational opportunities, budding entrepreneurs, and a strong sense of community.



An urgent need in the region is broadband access. Over the past year, we have all seen the impact of internet connectivity. From connecting students to school or linking patients to hospitals, broadband access can have a major impact on quality of life.

In Ohio, we are making access to broadband internet a priority. Projects throughout the region received Appalachian Region Commission (ARC) POWER funding, and in 2020, Ohio projects totaled \$2.68 million in awards. Through the Office of BroadbandOhio, we are taking a local, collaborative approach, engaging local leaders and industry partners. We know what works in Marietta may not work in Coshocton, but working together, we can find the right solutions.

Further, with more than \$200 million in the state budget, we recently launched the Residential Broadband Expansion Grant, which will help service providers increase access in unserved and underserved areas of the state. Access to broadband internet is important to Ohio's future, and the ARC and statewide efforts are positioning the region for better access.

Workforce and economic development are key priorities for our state, and our business assistance programs have focused on building success in the Appalachian region. Our Small Business Development Centers provided services to more than 2,000 businesses and entrepreneurs in Appalachia in the most recent program year, and our Export Assistance Network and Procurement Technical Assistance Centers have local offices in the 32-county area.

One challenge facing our country—and especially Appalachia—is substance abuse. While serving recently as ARC co-chair, I wanted to address this issue. Our team at the Governor's Office of Appalachia hosted listening sessions throughout the 32-county region to hear about the challenges that our citizens are facing on a local level. As a result of ARC's work and our local listening sessions, ARC formed the INvestments Supporting Partnerships in Recovery Ecosystems, or INSPIRE—a \$10 million initiative to address this crisis. The program helps people through recovery and gives them the support they need to get back into the workforce. In Ohio, projects such as the Recovery Ecosystem Expansion Initiative and the Southern Ohio Employer Resource Network have received funds through INSPIRE to address substance abuse in their regions.

Appalachia Ohio is resilient. Through our federal and state efforts, we continue to support the region with access to needed resources. For example, Ohio is the only Appalachian state that matches ARC funds with state dollars and has an office—the Governor's Office of Appalachia—specifically to address and represent the needs of the region. Director John Carey and his team take a local and personalized approach to projects in the region.

It was an honor to serve as ARC co-chair and represent the great state of Ohio. There are great things happening in Appalachian Ohio, and it has so much to offer Ohioans and the country. I will continue to work to help advance Appalachia's economic success. This region is filled with great people, unique history, beautiful landscapes, and offers a tremendous opportunity to find your future!

—Governor Mike DeWine

PENNSYLVANIA

Governor Tom Wolf

With 52 of our 67 counties calling Appalachia home, Pennsylvania is no stranger to the rich geography of the region filled with stunning mountain views, rivers and streams, and wildlife. It's home to tremendous cultural and historical resources and 5.6 million Pennsylvanians who live, work, and play in our commonwealth.

Pennsylvania's Appalachian region also reflects the sense of economic resiliency that is evident in our efforts over the past 50 years to partner with the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) to battle the impacts of poverty, unemployment, and low per capita income in many of our most vulnerable communities.

In Pennsylvania, we have one of the largest rural populations in the nation, so we know that a vibrant rural community is a place of opportunity—and we know that we must work cooperatively to address issues that span political boundaries to enhance the quality of life. We need to offer both young and mature workers the education necessary to gain the skills needed to access family-sustaining jobs, and we need to invest in infrastructure and our communities to sustain growth and entrepreneurial development.

The Wolf Administration recognizes the need for strategic investments in the state's Appalachian counties, where a dynamic and growing economy can offer opportunities and help strengthen individuals and communities. However, we also understand that the region is vulnerable as states throughout the nation are working overtime to meet the demands of the technology-driven times. Our collaborative efforts with ARC are critical in supporting Appalachian Pennsylvania to position itself to be a full, invested partner in the changing world economy.

These investments have long-been a top priority for my administration, yet one of the major limitations the region faces was exacerbated last year during the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to be highlighted as a



national issue for rural communities—broadband limitations, also known as the “digital divide.” Investments into Appalachian Pennsylvania would help level the playing field for internet access, one of the most critical infrastructure needs of our time. Whether for work, education, or leisure, having broadband access is a necessity, everywhere.

Our partnership with ARC also helps us address other high-priority issues like the needs of our coal-impacted communities and combatting substance use disorder within our 52 Appalachian counties. Together, we have taken major strides in advancing our goals to develop economic opportunities, ready the state's workforce, invest in critical infrastructure upgrades and healthcare networks that support substance abuse recovery professionals, utilize cultural and natural assets, support recovery-focused job training programs, and promote leadership and community capacity for Appalachian communities. In fiscal year 2020, we backed 65 projects totaling nearly \$23 million in investments—creating or retaining nearly 11,600 jobs and training and educating more than 3,200 students and workers.

While the partnership established by Pennsylvania and ARC has proved invaluable in supporting the Appalachian region, there is still more work to be done—but we know that our best days are ahead. My administration remains committed to a thriving Pennsylvania with schools that teach, jobs that pay, and government that works—and to providing Appalachian citizens and communities with the resources needed to promote self-sustaining economic development.

—Governor Tom Wolf

SOUTH CAROLINA

Governor Henry McMaster

As our states grow and prosper, new initiatives often overshadow successful ones commenced long ago. One of these is the Appalachian Regional Commission.

In South Carolina, the northwestern counties of Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Pickens, Oconee, and Spartanburg are within the Appalachian Region, which 1.2 million South Carolinians call home.

This region of the Palmetto State features some of our state's most iconic natural landmarks, drawing visitors from near and far to experience the tranquil beauty of Issaqueena Falls or the austere majesty of Table Rock. The abundance of natural resources also provides a wealth of recreational opportunities, from cycling at Paris Mountain to bass fishing at Lake Hartwell. All told, these experiences have helped to create a robust tourism economy across these six counties, generating \$2.3 billion in annual visitor spending.



Along with its natural beauty, Appalachian South Carolina is also known for its significant manufacturing footprint, including BMW, Michelin Tires, GE, Milliken & Company, and many others. The region is ever-expanding. In 2021 alone, we have announced 3,278 new jobs and over \$650 million in new capital investment in the 6 counties representing Appalachian South Carolina.

The six-county region is a benefactor of our state's partnership with the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). Established by an act of Congress in 1965, the ARC is a regional economic development agency that was created to address economic distress in the Appalachian region.

Thoughtful, deliberate ARC investment, combined with innovative thinking and the hardworking people of our state, has helped transform Upstate South Carolina into the thriving region we know it to be today.

Governor Robert McNair was a lead proponent of the Commission's creation. He appointed Jim Konduros, an attorney and a native of Anderson County, to be South Carolina's first representative on the Commission.

The Commission's focus in the 1960s and 1970s was to provide critical infrastructure to the often hard-to-reach and impoverished communities of the Appalachian region. Mr. Konduros led the first significant ARC investment in the state when he brought together the SC Highway Commission and the ARC to construct the 72-mile Cherokee Trail (SC Hwy. 11) through the state's foothills. He also helped create the Appalachian Community Service Network, an educational cable channel that later became The Learning Channel.

Over the last almost 50 years, the ARC has funded 1,578 projects in our state, totaling nearly \$250 million. Including match funding, total investment in the region reaches just over \$680 million.

One of those projects—the South Carolina Center of Aviation and Technology (SCTAC) Automotive Durability Track - will provide an automotive testing track with a dual purpose of training students and workers pursuing advance degrees in automotive engineering and research opportunities in South Carolina's robust automotive manufacturing industry.

Another program known as SC Codes utilizes ARC funds to achieve its goal of providing free access to educational opportunities that will help create career pathways in technology and programming.

Training our workforce in skills like computer coding and automotive engineering will define our future workforce.

Another result of ARC investment is the Greenville Childcare Career Development Pipeline, which works to recruit, train, and provide a network for female and minority entrepreneurs interested in the childcare field and willing to establish in-home care services.

ARC has provided funds to communities in Upstate South Carolina to develop, improve and promote cultural and natural assets, resulting in the growth of local businesses, more visitors and a reinvigorated pride for our communities.

One example, the City of Gaffney's Park and Amphitheater, was completed in 2019 and serves as an anchor attraction, hosting 23,000 visitors per year to the city's main street district. Another wise investment, the renovation of Simpsonville City Art Center, is projected to inject over \$400,000 annually to the local economy.

The funds have also provided needed infrastructure improvements for the Swamp Rabbit Trail, which has spurred the growth of entrepreneurial venues and continues to provide enjoyment and recreation to South Carolina residents and tourists alike.

The growth tied to ARC-funded projects in these counties has been transformative to our Upstate's local economies, which has benefited our entire state. One needs only to take a stroll down the streets of downtown Greenville, Spartanburg, Gaffney, or Anderson to appreciate the Appalachian Regional Commission's impact on the local businesses and tourism industries in these communities.

The vision reflected by the wise investments of the Appalachian Regional Commission illustrates the abundance of opportunities in this region. The best is yet to come.

—Governor Henry McMaster

TENNESSEE

Governor Bill Lee

Supporting Tennessee's rural citizens has been a top priority of mine since I signed my very first executive order. Executive Order 1 required each State department to examine its impact on our rural communities and make recommendations on how to better serve rural Tennesseans. As a result, we have implemented workforce development programs, criminal justice reform, programs to assist those battling addiction, and changes to our economic development incentives to better drive investment into underserved communities.

Through partnership with the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), we track our state's rural progress in part by our number of distressed counties, which are those that rank in the bottom ten percent of the nation economically. We have cut our number of distressed counties by more than half recently—from 19 distressed counties four years ago to nine today. For the 52 Tennessee counties in the ARC footprint, that number has improved from 11 to six distressed counties.



The ARC, made up of 420 counties in 13 states and 25 million people, has a mission to innovate, partner, and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth. Tennessee is partnering with the ARC on projects ranging from the development of 50 miles of bike trails in Cocke County to increase rural tourism to improving an industrial park in McMinn County that will help recruit new companies.

The COVID-19 pandemic reinforced the need for broadband connectivity across all of Tennessee, and the ARC has been a tremendous partner in the deployment of broadband. I encourage our broadband providers to leverage both state and federal funding sources to support the construction of broadband infrastructure to connect our remaining unserved Tennesseans. This strategy will be particularly effective in reaching our most rural and high-cost areas to serve. In a recent example, one broadband provider utilized both ARC and state broadband grant funds to build service to over 1,100 previously unserved homes and businesses in one

of Tennessee's struggling rural counties. This partnership with the ARC significantly increases the impact of Tennessee's state grant dollars. In total, the ARC has awarded over \$13 million to connect 13,000 unserved Tennessee homes and 800 businesses with high-speed internet.

The best way to help a community move out of economic distress is to ensure that the workforce has the skills needed for the jobs of the future. I created the Governor's Investment in Vocational Education (GIVE) program to expand access to vocational and technical training and give students an opportunity to discover quality career paths and gain skills needed for those careers. Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT) partner with community colleges, K-12 schools, economic development agencies, and employers to develop programs that meet local needs. We are currently accepting applications for the second round of funding. These projects will highlight and expand upon ARC investments in our TCATs to expand culinary arts, construction trades, automotive technology programs, and many others.

The ARC and Tennessee have also partnered to assist with workforce development for those coming out of our jails and prisons. A top focus of my administration is criminal justice reform, and an important part of that is ensuring that people who have served their sentences have good jobs that allow them to support themselves and their families. The ARC has funded projects in five Tennessee counties that train workers and give them work experience while they are incarcerated. The money they make goes toward paying court costs, catching up on fees, and starting savings accounts to help with expenses like transportation and housing.

The Appalachian Regional Commission is a great example of how federal, state, and local governments can work together to better support our communities. I deeply appreciate this partnership that continues to benefit our citizens in numerous ways, and I look forward to future opportunities to collaborate with my fellow Governors and ARC Chairwoman Gayle Manchin to strengthen this region.

—Governor Bill Lee

WEST VIRGINIA

Governor Jim Justice

For every home improvement project, big or small, you need the right tools to get the job done. That's one way to think about the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). Since 1965, ARC has been committed to investing in Appalachia by providing essential resources to build our communities, upgrade our infrastructure, and develop our regional economy.

ARC is a federal-state-local partnership, which includes 13 states in the Appalachian region, from southern New York to northern Mississippi, focusing on economic development in 420 counties across the Appalachian Region. West Virginia has a unique position within the ARC, because our entire state falls within the commission's 420-county footprint. No other state holds this distinction.

I know that the ARC is committed to West Virginia. As they do with all of Appalachia, the ARC is devoted to moving our state forward. So am I.

One way I have demonstrated this commitment is by elevating our State Development Office to a cabinet-level department within my administration; creating the West Virginia Department of Economic Development. This is the department that administers West Virginia's ARC program. I feel that elevating our economic development efforts to this level allows us to better tell Appalachia's story and market ourselves to the outside world.

As a partner with ARC, each year I work to identify top priorities affecting West Virginia and its citizens. The top priorities include providing basic infrastructure, such as water and wastewater systems, to our most vulnerable West Virginians; addressing substance use disorder and creating a recovery ecosystem that assists with workforce reentry; and revitalizing our communities affected by reductions in coal extraction, in-part by addressing abandoned and vacant buildings. Our partnership with the ARC also allows us to provide business support and assistance to increase economic opportunities and investment in the deployment of critical broadband infrastructure.



Other targeted investment priorities reflect my ongoing commitment to workforce development; technical and capital assistance to businesses; developing our emerging economic sectors such as technology, tourism, and advanced energy; and developing commercial and industrial sites.

Some of our most recent priority investments in West Virginia include:

- Economic opportunities: \$7.8 million invested in entrepreneurial strategies to strengthen the state's economy.
- Critical infrastructure: \$3.4 million invested in developing our critical infrastructure, including broadband, transportation, and water/sewer systems.
- Workforce: \$2 million to boost the education, skills, and health that West Virginians need to work and succeed.
- Additional priorities: \$1.1 million to develop our leadership and community capabilities and leverage our natural and cultural resources.

Our ongoing collaboration with the ARC allowed West Virginia to turn our priorities into action last year, resulting in:

- 30 projects in West Virginia being awarded support from the ARC funding,
- 2,000 students trained and educated,
- 1,000 jobs created or retained,
- \$14.3 million in total investment, matched by nearly \$10.8 million in other federal, state, and local funding, attracting an additional \$3.1 million in leveraged private investments.

These are only a few of the most recent ARC investments in West Virginia. ARC investments, as a whole, have been critical to our state's community and economic development needs, while maximizing our assets and allowing for continued growth in our economy.

Most recently, ARC welcomed its first federal co-chair from West Virginia, Gayle Manchin. I have known Gayle for a long time and have worked alongside her on several initiatives. I know, more than anything, Gayle wants goodness for West Virginia and the entire Appalachian Region. This is an exciting moment for West Virginia, and it is an exciting time for the ARC.

I thank everyone involved with the ARC from the bottom of my heart for all that you do for the people of West Virginia. I know that with the strong partnership between the ARC and our State, we can continue to develop and improve Almost Heaven West Virginia, ensuring a brighter future for our great state and the great people who call it home.

—Governor Jim Justice

ARC's History and Work in Appalachia

In 1963, the Conference of Appalachian Governors asked President John F. Kennedy to create a presidential commission to coordinate federal, state, and local action in addressing the Region's needs. In response, President Kennedy formally convened the President's Appalachian Regional Commission (PARC), a body of state governors and Cabinet-level officials to address persistent economic disparities in the Region in comparison to the rest of the nation. PARC's mission was to draw up "a comprehensive program for the economic development of the Appalachian Region."



Courtesy of The Charleston Gazette

PARC's work informed the Appalachian Regional Development Act (ARDA) which passed Congress with overwhelming bi-partisan support. When President Lyndon B. Johnson signed ARDA into public law on March 9, 1965, ARC was formally established as a unique federal-state partnership committed to strengthening Appalachia's economy and helping the Region's 13 states achieve economic parity with the rest of the Nation.

Since 1965, ARC has invested \$4.5 billion in approximately 28,000 economic development projects across Appalachia, attracting over \$10 billion in matching project funds.



Appalachian Regional Commission

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is an economic development partnership 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.

Since 1965, ARC has invested with local, regional, and state partners to transform Appalachian communities, create jobs, and strengthen the regional economy.

[ARC.GOV](https://www.arc.gov)