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Dear Friend,

Even during the lazy days of summertime, job creation announcements and opportunities are running at full speed in the AdvantageWest region. Read on to learn about job announcements, upcoming grants and workshops, the next session of Certified Entrepreneurial CommunitiesSM leadership training – plus an exciting new venue for Blue Ridge Food Ventures Marketplace.

Recent announcements: 350+ jobs coming to AdvantageWest region

134 jobs come to Caldwell County: Auto parts supplier Magna Composites LLC plans to expand three plants in North Carolina, including one in Lenoir that will create 134 new jobs over the next four years. Magna International operates 240 manufacturing facilities in 25 countries. [Learn more here.](#)

58 clean energy jobs: AdvantageWest will receive \$479,259 in federal recovery act funds to create clean energy jobs and internships in Western North Carolina. Two other entities in AdvantageWest's service area, the NC Arboretum and Appalachian State University, will also receive funds from the NC Energy Office program, creating a total of 58 jobs in the region. [Learn more here.](#)

54 jobs to result from NC Rural Economic Development Center grants: The following WNC communities will receive grants from the Rural Center designed to create jobs and address clean water needs:

- Morganton (Burke Co.): \$336,000 to renovate a building for reuse as a grocery store. Project will create 28 jobs.
- Henderson County: \$150,000 to construct a medical facility. Project will create 15 jobs.
- Alleghany County: \$72,000 to renovate a vacant building for reuse as a tavern and bowling alley. Project will create six jobs.
- Granite Falls (Caldwell Co.): \$60,000 to renovate a vacant building for reuse by a tire supply company. Project will create five jobs.
- Tryon (Polk Co.): \$40,000 to identify and map areas of the town's wastewater system that have problems with infiltration by rain and groundwater.
- Graham County: \$25,000 to develop architectural plans for the

renovation of a former gymnasium as a multi-use convention center. [Learn more here.](#)

53 jobs come to Rutherford County: C.M.I. Enterprises Inc., a national supplier of automotive soft-trim materials, will move its Florida manufacturing plant to Rutherfordton, creating 53 jobs and investing \$697,000 including lease payments. [Learn more here.](#)

32 jobs come to McDowell County: Edwards Wood Products Inc./Woodlawn is expanding into McDowell County with a new saw mill that will produce lumber, chips, sawdust, bark and other products. The company plans to create 32 jobs and invest more than \$1.96 million, including lease payments, during the next three years in Marion. [Learn more here.](#)

20+ new jobs at MARC: The Marketing Association for Rehabilitation Centers (MARC) has received a \$137,000 grant from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation to support its MARC Parity Initiative, which will create sustained revenue growth and 20 new jobs. Over three to five years, MARC expects business growth to result in 60 to 75 full-time jobs. [Learn more here.](#)

25 projects in WNC to receive more than \$5.7 million from ARC: Projects receiving funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) will help bring needed jobs and economic development to the AdvantageWest region and beyond. [Learn more here.](#)

Upcoming funding opportunities and grant deadlines

August 3, 6 – 8pm: Free workshop on SBA small business loans (Asheville)

Those seeking capital to start or expand a small business are invited to a workshop on two of the SBA's popular loan guaranty programs for small businesses. Presentation will focus on the basics of the SBA Community Express and SBA Patriot Express and other SBA-backed loan programs, including how to apply for a small business loan. Location: AB Tech at Asheville Mall. Presented by: AB Tech's Small Business Center. Questions: 828.254.1921 ext 5849. [Details and to register here.](#)

August 25, 10am – 12noon: Free business funding forum for small business (Marion)

Event will feature AdvantageWest as well as other agencies and lending institutions involved in delivering capital to small businesses. Service providers and lenders will give a brief overview of their organizations and will field questions from the audience focused on financing a startup or existing small business. Location: McDowell Tech, Marion. Presented by Congressman Heath Shuler. [Details and to register here.](#)

August 11 and 27: Application deadlines for State Energy Office funds

The following are among the RFPs recently announced by the State

Energy Office: Alternative Fuel and Advanced Vehicle Technology Funding Opportunity (Due Aug 11), Energy Efficiency Projects for Commercial, Industrial and Large Nonprofit Sectors (due August 11), Energy Efficiency and Block Grant Program – Transportation (due August 27). [Learn more here](#) and [here](#). You may also contact [Matt Raker](#), Sr. Director of AdvantageGreen & Grants Administration, for more info at mraker@awnc.org or at 828.808.2873.

September 3: Application deadline for NC Rural EDC job-creation grants

The N.C. Rural Economic Development Center is making \$23.8 million in grants available to support job-generating building reuse and water-sewer projects in the state's rural counties. The grants are awarded to local governments, which work with the businesses to ensure job creation. The next application deadline for the [Building Reuse and Restoration Grants Program](#), which helps communities restore and renovate vacant buildings for use by new and expanding businesses, is Sept. 3. Applications for the center's [Economic Infrastructure Water and Sewer Grants Program](#) are accepted on a rolling basis. [Learn more here](#).

Important updates from the Certified Entrepreneurial CommunitiesSM program

August 23: Deadline to indicate interest in pursuing CEC status.

Communities in the region interested in pursuing status as a Certified Entrepreneurial CommunitySM are urged to submit an official letter of intent to AdvantageWest by the deadline of August 23. For more information about the benefits and requirements of the CEC program, or to schedule a presentation to key leaders about the CEC process, contact [Pam Lewis](#), AdvantageWest's Sr. VP of Entrepreneurial Development, at 828.209.6249 or 828.273.8295. Letters of intent can be emailed to Pam at plewis@awnc.org or mailed to her at AdvantageWest, 134 Wright Brothers Way, Fletcher NC 28732.

September 13-15: CEC Leadership Training. Representatives from WNC communities that have indicated their interest in pursuing status as a CEC community (see previous paragraph) should plan to attend a 2½ - day training session to learn details about getting started and completing the rigorous five-step process of certification. The training is also appropriate for communities that have started, but not completed, the CEC process. Among the speakers will be Deb Markley of the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, presenting the Energizing Entrepreneurs, or e², program, a training tool used across the country and even internationally to help communities achieve their entrepreneurial development goals. Representatives of WNC communities that have received certification will also be on hand to share challenges and successes. For more information, please [Pam Lewis](#), AdvantageWest's Sr. VP of Entrepreneurial Development, at 828.209.6249 or 828.273.8295.

Two more communities achieve CEC designation. Burke and

Mitchell counties are AdvantageWest's newest Certified Entrepreneurial CommunitiesSM. Burke celebrated its official CEC designation on July 19 as part of Industry Appreciation Day and in partnership with Burke Economic Development Inc. Mitchell County will celebrate its CEC achievement on July 28 at the County Commissioners meeting. The two communities join the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, which celebrated its designation in May, and the following counties who have also earned certification: Haywood, Transylvania, Watauga and Polk.

Blue Ridge Food Ventures Marketplace is part of Asheville Wine & Food Festival on August 14

Blue Ridge Food Ventures' annual Marketplace showcasing the artisan and gourmet foods of BRFV clients has an exciting new venue: a special pavilion inside the WNC Magazine Asheville Wine & Food Festival. The event, inside the air-conditioned expo center at the WNC Agriculture Center, across from Asheville Regional Airport, takes place August 14, 1-5pm. For the price of admission, \$35 in advance and \$40 at the door, festival attendees can enjoy tastings from 20 BRFV producers and 35 wineries, distributors and stores. Plus, area restaurants will offer samples and the best chef in WNC will be named with the live finals of the Chef's Challenge cook-off. [Learn more and get tickets here.](#)

In the news

CNBC: NC is tops for doing business. In CNBC's America's Top States for Business, North Carolina ranks 4th best in the country. [Learn more here.](#)

Morganton News Herald: \$100,000 grant awarded to create small-business incubator. Drexel wins grant from the Golden LEAF Foundation with the goal of revitalizing the town's business climate and to provide a place where businesses can get their start. [Read the story here.](#)

Hendersonville Times-News: Hendersonville and Transylvania Counties win Preserve America designation. Two communities recognized by First Lady Michelle Obama for protecting and celebrating their heritage and using historic resources for economic development and community revitalization. [Read the story here.](#)

Travel + Leisure: World's Best Awards for 2010 includes The Inn on Biltmore. The Asheville property was ranked #20 among the Top 50 Resorts in U.S./Canada. [Read the story here.](#)

American Style: Asheville is #1 Small City in arts destinations poll.

In the arts magazine's 13th annual Top 25 Arts Destinations readers' poll, Asheville pulls ahead of Santa Fe. [Read the story here.](#)

Washington Post: Blue Ridge Parkway is a place to “take the slow road.” Author of Sunday travel feature says about the Parkway: “Once you get started, you don't want to stop.” [Read the story here.](#)

Got news?

We welcome your announcements about economic development activities within the 23-county region of Western North Carolina. Submit news and photos for possible inclusion to AdvantageWest newsletter editor Kathi Petersen at kpetersen@awnc.org. AdvantageWest reserves the right to modify submissions to conform to editorial guidelines, space constraints, timeliness and other circumstances.

Stay tuned for more economic development news from AdvantageWest.

[Questions, comments or observations about this newsletter?](#) [Have a regional event or update you'd like us to share?](#)

Visit our websites: [AdvantageWest Economic Development Group](#), [Blue Ridge Entrepreneurial Council \(BREC\)](#), [MountainSouth USA](#), and our strategic partners the [Blue Ridge National Heritage Area](#), the [Blue Ridge Angel Investors Network](#) and the [NC Department of Commerce](#).

PHONE 828-687-7234 / FAX 828-687-7552 / EMAIL info@awnc.org / www.advantagewest.com

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AdvantageWest Economic Development Group
134 Wright Brothers Way
Fletcher, NC 28732

828.687.7234

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