

# Rural Connections

April 2009  
<http://wrdc.usu.edu>

A Publication of the Western Rural Development Center



Creating Sustainable  
Communities in a  
Changing America

A National Collection of Extension Programs Presented at NACDEP 2009





# Rural Connections

Published by the  
©Western Rural Development Center  
Logan UT 84322-8335

April 2009  
Volume 3 Issue 2

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The Western Rural Development Center compiles this magazine with submissions from university faculty, researchers, agencies and organizations from throughout the Western region and nation. We make every attempt to provide valuable and informative items of interest to our stakeholders.

The views and opinions expressed by these agencies/organizations are not necessarily those of the WRDC. The WRDC is not responsible for the content of these submitted materials or their respective websites and their inclusion in the magazine does not imply WRDC endorsement of that agency/organization/program.

This material is based upon work supported by annual base funding through the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.



 Printed on post-consumer recycled paper.

Pgs. 37-41

Youth Education and  
Engagement Programs  
discussed including  
environmental education,  
civic engagement and  
entrepreneurship.

# Director's Message

The United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development defined sustainable development as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Sustainability necessarily involves stable employment opportunities that pay livable wages while being buffered from national and international economic trends that result in job losses in a community. Sustainability means that everyone has access to adequate education and lifelong learning opportunities that prepare them for meaningful work and a high quality of life. Sustainable development must assure that the integrity of the environment is maintained for future generations. In sum, the goal of sustainable development is to improve lives while expanding opportunities for all members of the community regardless of gender, age or ethnicity.

From the time of their initial settlement, rural communities have struggled to achieve sustainability. Many rural communities' economic bases have depended on resource extractive industries. Unfortunately, when used unsustainably, the resource becomes exhausted and the community withers.

Consequently, mining and timber ghost towns are scattered across the west. Other communities are currently dealing with severe environmental scars including toxins and dangerous pollution that severely impact the quality of life in the community

and opportunities for future development.

Finally, some communities have become heavily dependent on an industry that later closes because of technological or economic changes or because the corporation chooses to outsource to a foreign country resulting in job loss and serious economic impacts.

In this issue of *Rural Connections* we focus on sustainable development. Scholars from across the country portray various aspects of sustainability and describe several successful sustainable development programs. Articles include discussions of entrepreneurial-based economies where communities encourage the development of businesses that take advantage of local culture and resources. Other articles describe the importance of conservation and the need for equity.

Not only is the need for sustainable development in the rural west great, but also opportunities to achieve this goal are available that previously did not exist. Modern information and communication technology allow businesses to locate where they wish and still be connected to the necessary clients and customers. Communities can thus seek to attract or retain a wider variety of businesses that will improve the quality of life in their community both now and in the future.

The WRDC is committed to helping the communities of the rural west achieve these goals. 🏡



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## Call for Information!

Our nation's rural areas are desperately seeking means by which to maintain and build sustainable communities.

At a time when our local and national leadership is dedicated to encouraging entrepreneurial investment in our rural communities, what has Cooperative Extension been doing across the country to further enhance our communities'

abilities to effectively plan for and attract businesses?

How do communities assess their priorities for business recruitment? What role do our natural resources play in supporting and furthering our economic and community development efforts?

How can we provide our youth with the business savvy they need to become entrepreneurs?

The contributors in this issue of *Rural Connections* shed some light on a number of projects underway across the nation to assist our rural communities with their efforts to build and sustain their economies and way of life.

The WRDC acknowledges there are numerous rural community development projects being studied and implemented throughout the nation. This issue focused on 17

Cooperative Extension projects and studies each of which was presented at the NACDEP Conference held in San Diego, California, in April 2009.

We welcome you to contact us with news about your research projects, businesses and tools so we may share them with our stakeholders.

Please send details to the WRDC at [wrdc@usu.edu](mailto:wrdc@usu.edu).

# Contents

**1 A Message from the NACDEP President and Conference Co-Chair**

**ED JONES AND JIM GOODWIN**

**3 An Entrepreneur Based Economy**

**MYRA L. MOSS AND BILL GRUNKEMEYER**

**5 Her Seat at the Table**

**BETH S. STEDMAN AND JENNIFER H. BOYLES**

**7 Diversity, Change and Social Justice**

**MAURICE W. DORSEY**

**9 eXtension's Entrepreneurs and Their Communities Website — An Emerging Resource for Community and Economic Development Professionals**

**LOUIS BASSANO AND CHARLES FRENCH**

**11 Exploring Unintended Consequences in Community Development**

**BRUCE SCHWARTAU, MARY ANN G. HENNER AND MICHAEL DARGER**

**14 Providing Workforce Housing While Preserving Natural Character in New Hampshire Communities**

**MICHELE GAGNE**

**17 Economic Growth vs. Economic Development: Are you taking the time to measure changes impacting quality of life?**

**ANDY LEWIS**

**19 LULA — Leadership Training in Land Use and Community Conflict**

**DAVID KAY**

**21** Local Decision Maker — Plan Your Future  
RICK FARNSWORTH, INDRANEEL KUMAR AND CHRISTINE NOLAN

**25** Conservation: A Path to Community Sustainability?  
DAVID SHIDELER

**27** The Tourism Connection: Contributing to Sustainable  
Community Development in the 21st Century  
STEVEN BURR

**30** Creative Industries Promote Economic Growth  
NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

**31** The Shalom Farm: Growing Food, Family and Friends  
JONAH FOGEL AND REV. DAVID COOPER

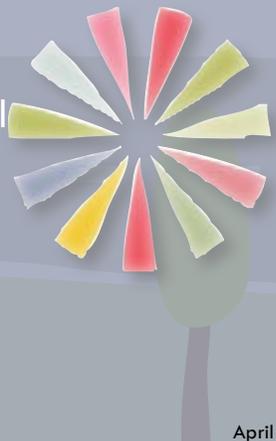
**33** Rural Farmers' Markets: Challenges and Opportunities  
AMY L. MEIER

**35** Earth, Wind, Fire: Preparing for Bio-energy Opportunities  
in Wisconsin  
ANDREW DANE

**37** Environmental Education: Forests for Today and  
Tomorrow  
MARSHA S. MOOREHEAD

**39** Youth Civic Engagement through the Youth City Council  
Program  
STANLEY M. GUY

**41** Listening to the Experts: A report on what we heard  
DIANE C. VIGNA, PATRICIA J. FAIRCHILD AND NANCY EBERLE





# A Message

from the NACDEP President and Conference Co-Chair

We are honored to share with you articles written by seventeen of the more than 90 presenters from the 2009 San Diego NACDEP Conference. The authors and presenters represent Extension educators and specialists from across the country and USDA professionals.

NACDEP, National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals, is an association of Extension experts working on community and economic development from land-grant universities across the United States. We are dedicated to improving the visibility, coordination, professional status, and resource base of community and economic development Extension programs and professionals.

We promote the importance of community and economic development through education, training, advocacy, and coordination within the land grant system. To learn more about NACDEP we invite you to visit the website <http://www.nacdep.net>.

This year's NACDEP Conference theme is "Creating Sustainable Communities in a Changing America." The planning committee chose the Three Es of Sustainability for the conference tracks while adding two Es, Engagement and Evaluation, to incorporate the diverse body of work conducted by Extension professionals.

The conference tracks are:

**Sustainable Economy:** Sessions in this track will address a wide variety of topics ranging from strategies to diversity economics to specific tactics such as entrepreneurship, business retention and expansion, Main Street and farm and ranch programs, tourism, as well as other business and economic development strategies.

**Sustainable Environment:** Sessions in this track will address issues including land use, water resources, nature-based recreation and stewardship of natural resources.

**Sustainable Social Equity:** Sessions in this track will include topics such as environmental justice, diversity, affordable housing, health care, safety and increasing participation of underrepresented groups.

**Engagement:** Sessions in this track will include topics such as leadership, civic engagement, volunteerism, social capital and deliberative democracy.

**Evaluation:** Sessions in this track will include topics such as measuring impact and providing accountability.

The articles in this issue of *Rural Connections* represent each of the five conference tracks and showcase the innovative programs being researched and implemented throughout the U.S. to benefit our nation's communities.

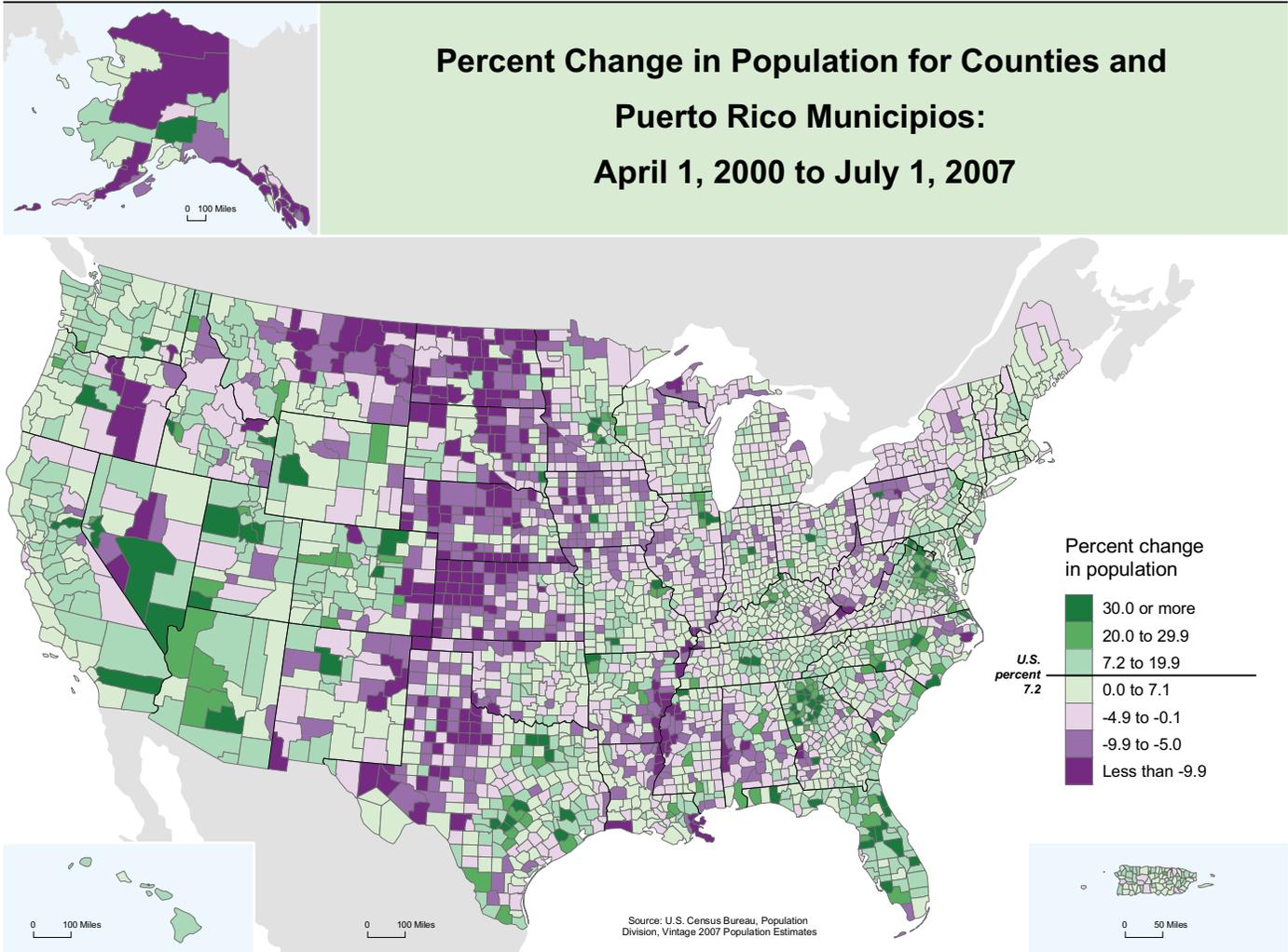
Sincerely,

Ed Jones  
North Carolina State University  
2009 NACDEP President  
NACDEP Conference Co-chair

Jim Goodwin  
Western Rural Development Center  
NACDEP Conference Co-chair

# Population Changes

in the U.S. and Puerto Rico



The extent to which communities achieve economic sustainability is often reflected in patterns of population change. National patterns often conceal widely varying circumstances from one community to another. The map on this page shows population change from 2000 to 2007 by county for the United States. Most obvious is the large band of counties with declining populations in the Great Plains extending from Canada to Mexico, a pattern that has persisted for decades. A number of nonmetro counties in the Great Plains area of the region covered by the WRDC experienced population declines. In contrast, a majority of nonmetro counties in the western states, especially those with extensive amenity resources experienced population growth.

# An Entrepreneur Based Economy

By Myra L. Moss and Bill Grunkemeyer

Entrepreneurship is emerging as the engine of economic growth and job creation in communities throughout the nation. Nationally communities have developed skills in attracting and retaining established businesses. Few communities, however, also understand the importance of building local and regional capacity to create and foster an environment that is entrepreneur-friendly. In a business environment, where high-growth entrepreneurs can choose to start up and build their businesses almost anywhere, the community with leadership that understands its crucial role in supporting entrepreneurship has a clear advantage.

## OSU Extension's Building Entrepreneur-Friendly Communities Program

Beginning in 2005, with grant assistance through the USDA Rural Community Development Initiative program, Ohio State University Extension created and implemented a pilot program and curriculum designed to build local capacity for entrepreneurship. Piloted in two rural communities, the program helped community leaders understand and develop capacities to create an environment that nurtures entrepreneurs. A series of workshops were conducted that identified and described the various capacities necessary to support entrepreneurs.

## Description of Building Critical Capacities

This program helps the community build critical capacities to effectively support entrepreneurship development. These capacities include:

- Informed, committed community leaders who recognize the value of entrepreneurship;
- A network of providers offering access to experience, advice, assistance and resources;
- A network that links entrepreneurs to each other and business opportunities;

- An incubation environment where entrepreneurs can increase efficiency;
- Telecommunications infrastructure that provides access to information and markets plus a networking and communications link.

## Informed Community Leaders who Value Entrepreneurship

Only recently has entrepreneurship development been given much attention, and then usually within the context of a few independent organizations providing direct assistance such as business planning and financing for individual entrepreneurs. To build broader community capacity, local leadership must first come to understand the existing and potential economic impact of entrepreneurship on their local economic base. In order to raise leaders' awareness and set the stage for the sessions to follow, the first curriculum component provides a statistical analysis of the local economy and the increasing contribution of small entrepreneurial firms. Table 1 demonstrates to one of the pilot communities the importance of small firms, usually entrepreneur-based, in creating jobs for the local community. Individual firms providing nineteen or less jobs nearly equaled the number of jobs created by firms employing 100 or more (2404 total jobs to 2833 jobs in 2007). In addition, between the years 2004 and 2007, firms employing less than nineteen people had only one job lost, compared to 215 for firms employing 100.

Lack of community capacity to support entrepreneurship is also aggravated by the frequent turnover of professional economic development personnel. Both pilot communities experienced changes in their professional economic development positions during the program.

One community replaced its economic development director less than two months after the first session, and the other changed their economic development director three times before the program was initiated. The first few sessions of the building capacity curriculum help public and private sector community leaders understand their roles in creating networks and relationships that remain constant, despite turnover among professional staff.

## Developing Entrepreneur and Service Provider Networks

A rich environment of networks among entrepreneurs, service providers, community leaders and resources is important to building community capacity. Local networks, both formal and informal, link emerging entrepreneurs with established entrepreneurs. Emerging entrepreneurs now gain access to advice, mentoring and information. The continuation of this entrepreneur network also provides direct sales from one business to another and the ability to obtain larger contracts through collaborative sales approaches.

Other networks that link resource providers with community leaders and public officials help to direct entrepreneurs to resource providers. We found that in smaller communities, public offices, such as the Auditor's or County Commissioner's offices, are the first point of contact for entrepreneurs. Often, these offices were unaware of who provided needed services so no referrals were made. The creation of a network among public offices, private organizations and

Size of Firm	Number of Workers 2007	Number of Workers 2004
4 and under	513	603
5-9	880	809
10-19	1011	993
20-49	1286	1459
50-99	1303	1345
100-249*	1425	1202
250-499	1408	1833

\*New firm attraction

Table 1: Pilot Community: Number of Workers by Size of Firm  
Source: Ohio Bureau of Labor Market Statistics

service providers addressed this problem. In addition, connecting to regional networks provides access to additional resources not available locally.

## Entrepreneur Incubation

Entrepreneurs need a place where they can obtain operational services at a low cost to reduce start-up and growth costs. Demands for and access to reliable high-speed Internet are also critical in areas where population distribution is sparse. The lack of high speed Internet outside of the village was a stumbling block that both communities faced in growing entrepreneurs. Each community prioritized an incubator as an asset to support entrepreneurs. As an interim step leading up to the creation of an incubator, one community created a Business Learning Center in a wing of the library that provided computers and high-speed Internet access to any business needing these services. Their “one stop” approach also networked with regional business development organizations to provide direct assistance in business planning, marketing and financing. The other community determined that the establishment of a formal location with regular hours for resource providers was an immediate step that could be taken while developing a long-range plan for the creation of an incubator connected with the local university.

## Conclusion

Although the program was only recently concluded, early indications of success are evident. Since the completion of this pilot program, each community has put into place strategies that best fit their local needs. As a result of new capacities each community has discovered there are local entrepreneurs seeking assistance. The resource provider network provides a greater capacity to assist these entrepreneurs. The completion of the Building Community Capacity for Entrepreneurship program has effectively implemented the strategy of fostering entrepreneurship as a key component of each community’s economic development program. 🏠

## Authors’ Picks for Further Reading

OSU’s Sustainable Development Initiative  
📄 <http://sustainabledevelopment.osu.edu/>

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“We found that in smaller communities, public offices, such as the Auditor’s or County Commissioner’s offices, are the first point of contact for entrepreneurs.”



# Her Seat at the Table

By Beth S. Stedman and Jennifer H. Boyles

The rising power and influence of women globally is considered to be the most significant social trend for the next 20 years according to futurist Mary O'Hara-Devereaux. Women will continue to make considerable progress and gain power as decision makers socially, politically, and economically. Yet, in spite of the progress that is being made, the status of women in South Carolina continues to lag behind that of women in other states in the U.S. when a number of key indicators are considered:

- Women are still underpaid. Although 34 percent of South Carolina's employed women work in managerial and professional positions, women earn only 73.7 cents for each dollar earned by a man.
- Women are poor. Fifteen percent of South Carolina's women live in poverty and nearly one-third of single women with children live in poverty.
- Women are unhealthy. South Carolina ranks 40th in the nation for women's overall health and well being.
- Women are victims of domestic abuse at alarming levels. Since 2000, South Carolina has ranked in the top 10 states in the nation for women murdered by men.
- Women are under-educated. Nearly one-third of South Carolina's women lack a high school diploma, as compared to 25.2 percent nationally.
- Women are massively missing in the ranks of state leadership. South Carolina ranks 50th in the U.S. for women serving in state elected office. South Carolina currently is the only state in the nation to have no women elected to its state senate.

Given these challenges, how can we begin to address questions of equity

and empowerment so that women and their families can enjoy greater economic opportunity and an overall improved quality of life?

SC Women's Connection, an initiative of the Clemson (University) Institute for Economic and Community Development and Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service, was created to facilitate and further develop the leadership capacity and raise the status of women in the Palmetto State. Through its educational programs and seminars, SCWC empowers



women to become dynamic participants in the leadership of businesses, civic organizations, non-profits and government, and to be actively engaged in community stewardship and philanthropy. SCWC brings together women and men who are interested in sharing their experiences and expertise to create pathways for positive social, political, and economic change by developing the leadership capacity of women in our state.

Current focus areas include:

- Leadership Development and Civic Engagement: We seek to develop a diversity of women leaders for government, for-profit, and non-profit sectors to include running for political office and serving on boards and commissions. By increasing women's representation at the decision-making

tables, we will help bring a more balanced, diverse perspective to public and private policymaking.

- Personal and Professional Development: We provide opportunities for women to enhance their skills and knowledge so that they can lead more successful and fulfilling lives at work and at home.
- Entrepreneurship: Business development programs assist women as they expand their options for economic empowerment by creating new businesses or growing their current organizations.

- Philanthropy and Community Stewardship: Women learn to develop strategies to make the most effective use of the gifts of their time and money. Through partnerships with organizations such as the United Way, they engage in community grant-making initiatives.

- Connections: SCWC builds networks of women leaders by creating avenues for them to meet, discuss, and learn from each other in order to develop future opportunities for their businesses, communities, region, and state.

Women's transformational leadership is often a missed opportunity, not only in South Carolina but also throughout the United States and indeed the world. The underutilization of women's talent in the Palmetto State has social and political implications but also comes at a staggering cost economically. For example, if women in South Carolina participated in the workforce and were paid at the same rate as men, the benefit to the state annually would be:

- \$12.7 billion in new wages earned resulting in a total economic impact of some \$16.9 billion.

- Increase in jobs of more than 144,000.
- Increase in income and sales tax revenues of \$1 billion.

Women bear a great deal of responsibility for their families' economic security; yet factors such as the wage gap, the percentage of women in lower-paying jobs, poor health and the lack of educational attainment limit their ability to ensure their families' financial well-being.

### Conclusion

Investing in the advancement of women and girls can have a substantial impact on economic growth. Empowering South Carolina's women is key to the continued development and progress of the state socially, politically, and economically. Through its programs and initiatives, SC Women's Connection employs an underinvested strategy for economic and community development—the growth and development of women leaders to address the challenges of the 21st century and beyond.

### Authors' Picks for Further Reading

Catalyst, *Expanding Opportunities for Women and Business*

<http://www.catalyst.org>

Institute for Women's Policy Research

<http://www.iwpr.org>

The White House Project

<http://thewhitehouseproject.org>

National Center for Research on Women

<http://www.ncrw.org>

SC Women's Connection

<http://www.clemson.edu/scwc>

*Why Women Should Rule the World* by Dee Dee Myers

*Closing the Gender Gap: Why Women Can and Must Help Run the World* by Marie Wilson

*How to Say It For Women: Communicating with Confidence and Power Using the Language of Success* by Phyllis Mindell

*Women Lead the Way: Your Guide to Stepping Up to Leadership and Changing the World* by Linda Tarr-Whelan (To be released Oct. 1, 2009)

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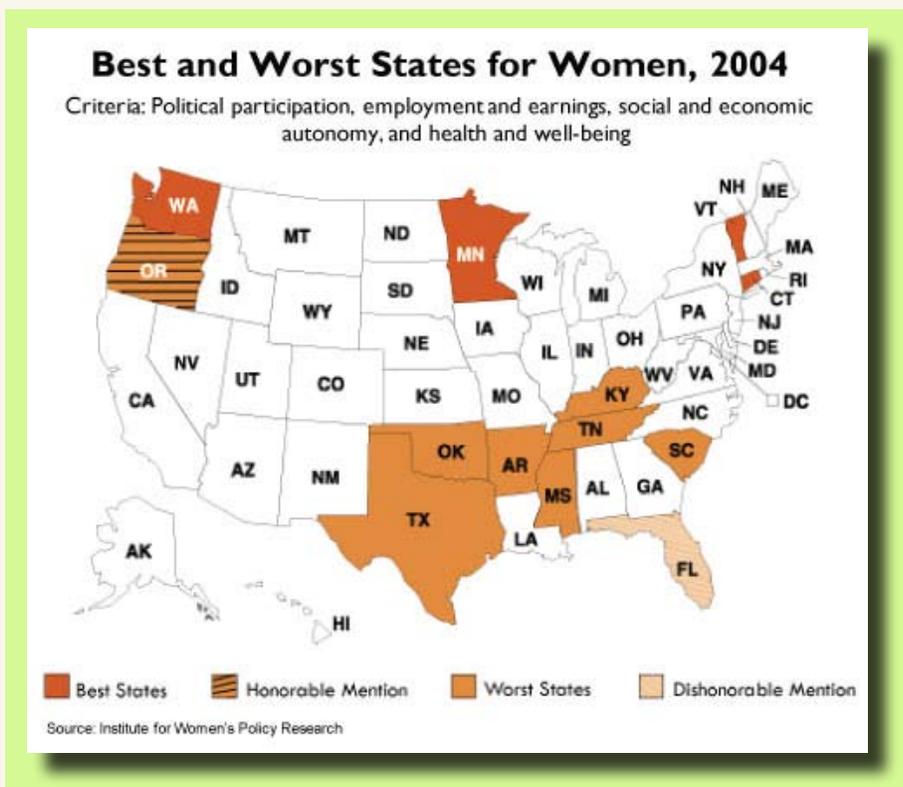
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# Diversity, Change and Social Justice

By Maurice W. Dorsey

Diversity and social change begin with you! Do you know who you are? If yes, how do you know? Using yourself as an instrument of change (K. K. Smith 1990) is what this paper is all about; your presence, influence, and intervention skills at the individual, interpersonal, group, organization and systems levels of change. The goal here is to achieve self-knowledge and self-management.

To bring about a change in you, you must maintain an open mind, you must be open to deconstructing self, and you must open yourself to rethinking of self. If you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you have always gotten!

Diversity and change entails reexamining your position on issues of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, social class, and other categories of diversity and social justice that are often very uncomfortable, especially when you look in the mirror.

We are a world society of groups: white, black, male, female, rich, poor, gay, straight, young, old, professional, non-professional, abled, differently abled, light skinned, dark skinned, etc. Groups are divided into dominant and subordinated categories. If you are in the dominant groups the world looks pretty good to you, but if you are in the subordinated group the world is less than perfect.

Further groups are divided by generational differences such as the veteran generation (1925-42); the baby boomers (1943-62); generation X (1963-

81); and millennium (1982-2000). These distinctions further divide older employers and younger employees, parents and children, old-school thinkers and new age thinkers.

What groups are you in? How do you feel about being in these groups? We are all members of various groups in society, some more powerful and/or privileged than others, and the various memberships we have in these groups intersect to create each person's unique social location. If you are in the socially privileged groups in the US - white, male, Christian, heterosexual, middle-aged, professional, abled, rich, etc. - you are privileged and in most cases don't have any idea of what it is like to be in the subordinated groups, which include people of color, females, non-Christians, gays, non-professionals, the poor, and the differently abled. Moreover, if in the latter group, you are likely to be a victim of dominant-group power, control, and authority. People are often unconscious of how they oppress others on a day-to-day basis, especially if they possess more privileged social locations. Regardless of the logical explanation, the pain and hurt of oppression still impacts those who have been victims. Some oppression leads to abuse and violence, either mental, physical, and/or emotional.

There are two types of oppression: institutionalized and internalized. Institutional oppression is when a group, organization, or system maintains and imposes the wants and needs of highly dominant group identifications, i.e. white, male, Christian, heterosexual.

Internalized oppression is within you, when you deny your subordinated group identification. Former President Roosevelt could have been a spokesperson and poster child for the differently abled had he publicly acknowledged his disability during his presidency. Other examples of internalized oppression include: women who state that they hate working for other women; gays

who hate flamboyant gays; blacks who hate other blacks because of color or complexion; or Christians who condemn other Christians. These behaviors inspire social scientists to ask how oppressed groups oppress other oppressed group? We are all in it together regardless of internal oppression and regardless of the logical response.

The Johari Window (Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham) is one of the most useful models describing the process of human interaction. A four-paned "window" divides personal awareness into four different quadrants: open-self, blind-self, hidden-self, and the unknown-self. Your open-self is the self you and others know and what is known about you (conscious); your blind-self includes things that others know about you but you do not (unconscious); your hidden-self encompasses things that you know about you and others do not (conscious); and your unknown self includes things about you that you and others do not know (unconscious). See Table 1.

Quadrant Behavior Theory, created by Cathy Royal, also utilizes a four-paned "window" dividing white males, white females, black males, and black females. White males are assigned a plus-plus for white and male, two dominant groups; plus-minus for white female, a group with one dominant and one subordinate intersection in terms of social location; minus-plus for black males, with one dominant group affiliation; and minus-minus for black females, with no dominant group identification. This theory is very powerful when analyzing group dynamics and provides a great insight into how dominant and subordinate groups interact. This theory also is an excellent instrument for tracking behavior patterns at the interpersonal, group, organization, and systems level of change. When thoroughly studied, this theory unveils why conflict arises between dominant and subordinate individuals and groups.

Tracking Behaviors (Elsie Cross &

	Known to Self	Not Known to Self
Known to Others	1 OPEN	2 BLIND
Not Known to Others	3 HIDDEN	4 UNKNOWN

Table 1. The Johari Window



“We are all members of various groups in society, some more powerful and/or privileged than others, and the various memberships we have in these groups intersect to create each person’s unique social location.”

Associates, Inc. and Delyte D. Frost, et al.) is a useful way of tracking and analyzing group participation. Considerations when tracking/observing group interaction and participation include: observing who is in the group; observing who is talking and who initiates. We can also ask: Who interrupts whom? What patterns do you see? Generally speaking, the answer to each question is the dominant group. Dominant groups dominate the group, talk the most, initiate more frequently, and interrupt more frequently. Subordinate groups are more often silent. Subordinate groups need to ask themselves: What is the impact on ME? How does this make me feel? What am I going to do about it? The single best thing a subordinated person can do is make certain their voices are heard. Silence perpetuates all “isms.”

Path to Diversity Competence (Elsie Cross & Associate, adapted by Jack Grant & Delyte D. Frost) describes diversity competence in four major stages: denial,

fear, integration, and competence. Denial is a position of “nothing is wrong;” fear is an understanding of what is wrong but the individual is immobilized i.e. “frozen;” integration is starting to make changes in behavior or “defrosting;” and competence is the habit of doing the right thing toward subordinated groups all of the time. This is a very difficult stage to attain.

Understanding yourself is gaining a clear understanding of you by knowing your dominant and subordinated group status and memberships; claiming and accepting each of your group identities; understanding that power, privilege, and control come with dominant groups; understanding and discerning institutionalized and internal oppression; knowing your blind and hidden self; seeking knowledge of your blind self and learning to track human interaction in your interpersonal and group relationships; and, finally, analyzing the impact all of this has on YOU!

Who are you? And how do you know? 📖

### Author’s Picks for Further Reading

NTL Institute

📖 <http://ntl.org>

Elsie Y. Cross Associates, Inc.

📖 <http://eyca.com>

For more information on Cathy Royal or Johari Window, simply enter the words into a Google search and numerous references will be queried.

### About the Author

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# eXtension's Entrepreneurs and their Communities Website

## An Emerging Resource for Community and Economic Development Professionals

By Louis Bassano and Charles French

### Introduction

Launched in 2007, eXtension is rapidly transforming Cooperative Extension's outreach capabilities. By creating a web-based, interactive, user-friendly learning environment, eXtension is making available reliable, research-based information from the nation's land-grant universities to anyone, anywhere, at any time, using any Internet-capable device.

Networks of subject-matter experts that provide content for specific themes and topics power eXtension. These networks are called "communities of practice" (CoPs). Consisting of faculty, professional staff, county educators, industry leaders, and others, these virtual experts share their knowledge and expertise in specific content areas to create highly effective educational tools, resources and programs.

The entrepreneurs and their CoPs consist of 330 Extension educators and researchers nationwide. The goal of our CoP is to make information available on our website that will help to build strong rural economies through the efforts of individual entrepreneurs or by the adoption of public policies and strategies that create and nurture entrepreneurial communities.

An important aspect of maintaining a vibrant, high-quality website demands that we seek the input and advice of our larger team of CoP members and others who can comment on its quality, value, and relevance. This article provides a brief overview of the entrepreneurs and their Communities website and examines user data collected from stakeholders through the use of website user statistics, online survey questionnaires, and post-program participant feedback. Suggestions for improving the website are offered.

### Key Resource Areas

The Entrepreneurs and their Communities website contains key resource areas. Each resource area, described below, utilizes a different format to engage the learner and is designed to be a source of current information on entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial communities.

- Case Studies – Case studies feature stories about real people sharing their challenges and solutions to problems they have faced in their business. Written interviews, visuals and links to other resources are used to bring issues and their resolutions into sharp focus.
- Information Briefs – This resource

area features two-three page reports that expand on key entrepreneurship topics. Twenty-two briefs have been published.

- State and Local Policies – This resource area highlights important policies that contribute to the development and growth of entrepreneur-friendly communities.
- Research References – This resource area is designed to keep readers abreast of the latest research findings in the field of entrepreneurship and community development. Approximately 35 research articles have been published.
- Webinar Series – This resource area features monthly webinars on a variety of topics. Ten webinars have been conducted and each is archived and available for viewing.
- Data and Cool Tools – When it becomes active, this resource area will contain assessment tools and other instruments that can be used by community planners to evaluate a community's readiness to support entrepreneurship.
- Frequently Asked Questions – This resource area contains

over 260 questions and answers pertaining to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial communities.

- Ask the Expert – This resource area provides website visitors with an opportunity to pose a question to be answered by a member of the CoP with expertise in the subject matter queried.

### Selected Survey Results

Part one of a two-part online survey was completed by 69 CoP members. This survey solicited information on user characteristics and website usage patterns. Part two of the survey was completed by 37 CoP members. This survey asked respondents for feedback on five key resource areas: case studies, information briefs, state and local policies, research references, and webinars. In addition, survey participants were asked to road test the search engine by posing a question pertaining to entrepreneurship or entrepreneurial communities. Finally, respondents were asked their overall impressions of the website.

Over 70% of the respondents reported being either an educator or specialist. Almost half indicated that community development was their primary program area. Most respondents indicated they planned to visit the website monthly to obtain information for public presentations, articles and other reports. Over half of the respondents planned to refer clients to the website.

Webinars and information briefs were rated by the survey respondents as being most useful. Eighty-six percent of the respondents rated webinars “useful” or “very useful” and participation trends indicate that webinars are becoming more popular. The majority of respondents rated all of the five resource areas as “useful” or “very useful.”

Fifteen people tested the website search function. Respondents most frequently answered that they were able to locate the information they were seeking by doing a single search that took less than

one minute and that the information they found was “helpful.”

The website was rated highest on the “readability of information” found and “understandability of its content.” Asked to rate the overall website, 56% rated it “useful” or “very useful” and 44% rated the website “somewhat useful.”

Respondents liked the ability to navigate the site, the quality of the articles yielded by the search engine, the ability to locate answers to frequently asked questions and the research references and webinars resource areas.

### User Statistics

Google Analytics enables us to track the number of page views on the “Entrepreneurs and their Communities” website and identify those sections most often viewed. From January 15 to February 15 of 2009, 1,766 “Entrepreneurs and their Communities” pages were viewed, with 1,234 of these views being unique (i.e. separate individuals). Most popular was the webinar series. These statistics are nearly identical with the same period last year, suggesting that the number of website users has leveled off.

### Discussion and Recommendations

This study focused on identifying user characteristics, usage patterns and overall impressions of the entrepreneurs and their Communities website. The national entrepreneurship team should be pleased with the results of this study. Generally speaking, survey respondents were positive about the content of the website’s key resource areas, the utility of its search engine and its overall usefulness. In addition, respondents indicated that they planned to return to the website regularly in search of the latest information on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial communities.

Despite Google Analytics reports of a leveling off of website visits, we expect that with eXtension’s continued marketing efforts and the flow of new

information and resources to the site, that the number of users and the frequency of their visits will increase. This will pose a significant challenge for the national entrepreneurship team, which will need to recruit additional contributors to the key resource areas and devote more time to maintaining the website and managing the flow of information to assure the content quality remains high.

Based on the survey results, we recommend changing or modifying the website design so that it is more intuitive. This will enhance the users’ ability to quickly locate information. Second, we urge content contributors and reviewers to eliminate the use of jargon and term of art descriptors and phrases. Finally, we recommend adding interactive, decision-making tools that enhance the value of information that users already have by taking them through a process that helps them make more informed decisions. 

### Authors’ Picks for Further Reading

eXtension

 <http://www.extension.org/>

eXtension Entrepreneurs and Their Communities

 <http://www.extension.org/entrepreneurship>

“Main Street Economist,” a newsletter of the Kansas City Federal Reserve that provides great insight into entrepreneurship and rural development.

 [www.kansascityfed.org/RegionalAffairs/MainStreet/Mainstmain.htm](http://www.kansascityfed.org/RegionalAffairs/MainStreet/Mainstmain.htm)

### About the Authors

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# Exploring Unintended Consequences in Community Development

By Bruce Schwartz, Mary Ann G. Hennen and Michael Darger



The 21st century poses complex challenges - and opportunities - in our communities. Community development or policy-making changes are usually enacted with the best intentions in mind, but experience tells us that unintended results or consequences of decisions can also occur – negative or positive! For example, reducing the speed limit from 50 mph to 30 mph on an open highway near a school intersection may actually increase the number of traffic accidents. If a budget cut forces restructuring, previously complacent workers may develop more creative solutions to issues they could not previously tackle. Understanding the possible positive and negative consequences when making a decision can help guide decision-makers in formulating better choices.

In 2008, the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) invited University of Minnesota Extension’s Center for Community Vitality staff to join them in learning a new decision-enhancing approach that helps civic leaders think strategically in these complex times. Created by futurist Joel Barker through 30 years of research and experimentation, the Implications Wheel® (a visual process of ‘cascade thinking’ taught by

“Understanding the possible positive and negative consequences when making a decision can help guide decision-makers in formulating better choices.”

the Institute for Strategic Exploration) helps organizations explore the possible unintended consequences of ideas. His strategic exploration method has been used mainly by private industry to scout the second and third order implications of new products, processes, and acquisitions.

Joel Barker notes that strategic exploration should be conducted before forming a strategic plan. To describe this process, Barker uses an analogy of an American wagon train. The wagon master’s role was to make the final decision about their route, but he sent out scouts in many directions to inform him about the geography ahead. Today, we see the wagon master as the ultimate decision maker of an organization and the scouts are the diverse people who help explore the possible consequences of the decision. Barker notes that “cascade thinking” goes beyond brainstorming. This process recruits participants from differing status levels to look further into the future to explore the broad range of positive and negative implications of major decisions. It allows participants to be creative, yet safe, with their input since the criteria are that the implications might happen, even if only a one-in-a-million

chance. Decision-makers can then view more of the possibilities in front of them and make strategic plans that lead them to the most desired outcome.

A driving motivation for AMC, Extension, and others invited to learn this process was to see whether this resource could be used by county and other local government leaders to investigate the positive and negative consequences of potential public policy changes. One policy explored at an early working session was concerning how and where short-term offenders should be housed. Analyzing possible changes helped county commissioners and their lobbyists understand the potential impacts of decisions on prisoners, families, county finances, prison officials, sheriffs’ deputies, court employees, elected officials, and others. After delving into these implications, AMC was more clearly able to determine their preferred direction and the steps necessary for guiding the policy to a desired outcome.

Building on what they learned with AMC, the U of M Extension Center for Community Vitality led an I-Wheel® Strategic Exploration process as an

Questions (Scale of 1 = Not at all; 6 = To a great extent)	Average choice	Average of facilitators
How practical is this process to enhance decision-making?	4.34	5.17
How comfortable were you in sharing your ideas?	5.03	4.00
How applicable is the I-Wheel→ process to informing decisions in the public sector?	4.41	5.33

Table 1. Survey Results.

opportunity to use and assess how this process could be applied in the field of community development. In forming a possible response to an RFP, they explored the implications of relocating a regional center for community development to Minnesota. They invited University faculty, Extension educators, EDA board members, non-profit directors, and others to participate in a combination of three smaller sessions (3-10 participants each) and a large group session (40 participants).

A successful I-Wheel® process requires trained facilitators and many informed participants. A cadre of educators was trained to facilitate the small group discussion and use the software to capture the implications generated. All participants viewed a short Joel Barker video and were given an overview of the process and steps for the first 45 minutes of the large session. Certified Wheel Trainers who completed three days of instruction with the Institute for Strategic Exploration conducted this training.

After completing the I-Wheel® process, surveys were distributed to collect feedback from the participants and facilitators as well as the leadership team that received the implications that were explored. See Table 1.

It appears that the people who receive more I-Wheel® training are more confident in the process. One might hypothesize that the facilitators' deeper understanding of each step in the process explained this differential. Participants in the November 2008 sessions only generated second- and third-order implications that built upon the first order implications that were determined by a leadership team.

The evaluation surveys did indicate that some of the facilitators did not want their comments to interfere with others, so they did not share as many ideas. This may indicate that the facilitators need to be encouraged to offer neither more

nor less ideas than other participants. The majority of participants felt it was a safe environment to share ideas. Seventy percent answered with a rating of 5 or 6. Here is a typical comment "The facilitator in my group did a great job of pulling everyone's ideas out and pushing us along to get it done."

Comments about the technique's practicality in enhancing decision-making were as follows:

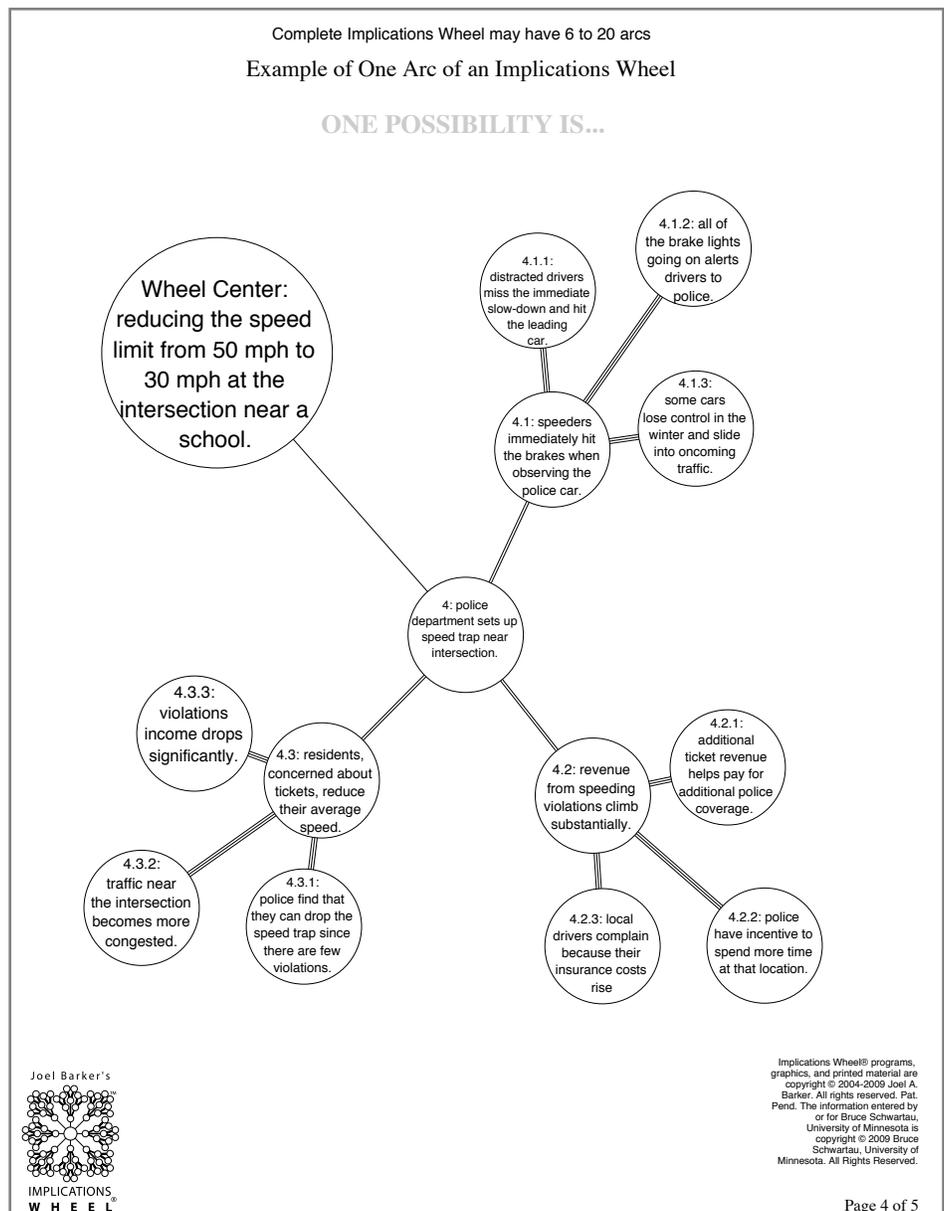
- "... the more complex and important

the decision, the more practical the I-Wheel process."

- "... it's not so practical day-to-day. However, for a big decision, it seems quite "practical" in that it takes in diverse perspectives and teases out 'what ifs' in a quick and seemingly thorough form."

Comments comparing I-Wheel are represented by the following:

- "Is much better because it seems more driven."



- “This engages everyone at a deeper level – they are actively providing input the full time.”

## Conclusion

The Implications Wheel® has been used for many years in the private sector. The Association of Minnesota Counties has now used it. U of M Extension invited participants with experience in public policy to join them in using the Implications Wheel® to analyze a major organizational decision. Evaluations indicated that the process may have some potential for major decisions but is not as useful for making day-to-day decisions. Comments made by some of the participants reinforced the need to be clear about what their role is in the process. Participants will not be making the decision, but rather they are informing decision makers of possible unintended consequences that managers might have missed.

University of Minnesota Extension has not made any decisions about using the process in their Community Vitality programming with the public. Two areas that may be investigated are to make it

an optional offering when we are helping a community analyze a major project with an input/output analysis or when a business retention and expansion program is looking at a major project. 🏠

## Authors' Picks for Further Reading

For more information about the Implications Wheel® visit 🌐 [www.implicationswheel.com](http://www.implicationswheel.com) where there are more case studies and a sample of the software. There are also research papers that differentiate this process from other methods of decision-making.

Implications Wheel® and I-Wheel® are registered trademarks of Joel A. Barker

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Joel Barker's Implications Wheel® Strategic Exploration Tool. Find the Future Faster™. Leader's Guide. Copyright © 2001-2005 Joel A. Barker, Infinity Limited, Inc.

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All of them are associated with University of Minnesota Extension Center for Community Vitality.



# Providing Workforce Housing

## while Preserving Natural Character in New Hampshire Communities

By Michele Gagne

### Situation

New Hampshire communities recognize that in order to remain vital socially, economically, and physically, they must commit to maintaining a strong agricultural and natural resource base, as well as provide affordable housing opportunities for diverse income levels of individuals and families. In spite of this inherent recognition, the predominant approach to land-use planning in New Hampshire over the past three decades has been the incorporation of large-lot subdivisions. The result is that conservation interests and affordable housing interests often compete for the same lands and each party claims that the other drives up the price of land, making acquisition of land for either purpose more difficult.

Effective July 1, 2009, Senate Bill 342 will go into effect for municipalities in New Hampshire. SB 342 provides a series of definitions, including:

- “Affordability” (30% cost burden),
- “Workforce housing” (affordable for renters at 60% area median income or owners at 100% area median income),
- Multi-family housing (five or more units per structure), and
- “Reasonable and realistic opportunities.”

It mandates that “all municipalities provide reasonable and realistic opportunities for the development of workforce housing, including rental and multi-family housing; essentially, its ‘fair share’ (Frost, 2008).



### New Hampshire Growth and Development Roundtable and its Solution

A statewide collaborative called the Growth and Development Roundtable was formed in 2005 to bring together the interests of affordable housing and land conservation with the goal of identifying creative solutions to meeting the needs of both interests. It is a group of prominent leaders from several of New Hampshire’s housing, conservation, planning, business and municipal interest groups that created the Housing and Conservation Planning Program (HCPP).

HCPP’s goal is to provide a small amount of funding to municipalities through a competitive application process to “purchase technical assistance related to planning for future housing growth needs, including the need for affordable and workforce housing, while preserving quality of life, using land efficiently, and identifying key natural and historic areas to conserve.” Six communities were selected in 2008, the first year of funding. This article will demonstrate a current case study of one of those communities.

### Chichester: A New Hampshire Case Study

Chichester, New Hampshire, has utilized a range of activities to get public input into how to conserve open space, while at the same time preserving its rural character with agricultural lands/open space and historic preservation. With a population of about 2500, Chichester is a rural community just outside of the state capitol of Concord.

HCPP funding is supporting the assistance of University of New Hampshire

Cooperative Extension (UNHCE) to work with a community Master Plan Advisory Committee (MPAC) and Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission (CRPC) to create a build-out scenario so that citizens could visualize what their community would look like if they didn’t plan proactively. Educational programs were conducted in the community to prepare residents for the process, including workforce housing, agricultural commissions and historic preservation, with about 35 participants attending each program.

Approximately 80 residents completed a Master Plan survey between December 2008 and January 2009, asking them to outline their preferences for conservation and preservation in the community while at the same time maintaining their tax base with residential and small commercial development. Preliminary results were shared at a public forum facilitated by UNHCE in February 2009, where about 50 residents were asked to think about what they’d like to see Chichester look like 5-10 years in the future in the areas of housing, business

## Visioning Session Results 2/14/09

### Where should growth be directed? Where are the priority open space areas?

Red, Yellow, Orange Sticker = More suitable for development  
Green, Blue Sticker = Less suitable for development

**Forest Block**

This Forest block as well as the floodplain area to the East did not have a cluster of Green Stickers. Either this area is not a priority to residents at the visioning session, or possibly the large areas of non-buildable OSW zoning made this area appear less vulnerable to development. It should be recognized that it may not be possible to depend on the OSW zoning as a long term conservation strategy due to potential legal variances, challenges in court, etc.) issues in the future, and because Zoning is not a permanent conservation tool such as deed restrictions, easements, or conservation lands. Because of this, conservation efforts in this part of town should not be ignored. In addition, much of this area was highly valued by the NRI.

**Forest Block**

It appears that this forest block is the most valued open space to the residents at the visioning session. This block appears to be currently subject to more development than others in town because there is less area classified as the OSW zone which prohibits development. Much of this forest block was highly valued in the NRI. This area may be a suitable area for a sending zone in a TDR.

**Rt. 4 corridor west of the town center**

This area of town was identified as more suitable for development by residents at the visioning session. Access management along Rt. 4 would be necessary, as mentioned by residents at the visioning session. It may be better to have access from existing roads instead of creating new curbs cuts. This General area of town near Rt. 4 with better access to Concord is generally more suitable for development than more remote places in town. It also was not valued as high as other places in town by the NRI.

**Rt. 28 near Pittsfield Town Line**

This area of town was identified as more suitable for development by residents at the visioning session. A zoning district similar to the Commercial Village district may be considered, along with higher densities and possibly mixed uses. Access management along Rt. 28 would need to be a priority, as mentioned by residents at the visioning session.

**Town Center**

Residents from the visioning session indicated that this area was both a suitable area for development, as well as a priority conservation area. It appears that some people prefer a traditional town center model and would welcome some development here. It is also clear that the scenic views and/or historic feel and the active farmlands are of high value. Zoning should allow some development clustered in targeted appropriate areas, while strong measures should be taken to protect valued farmland and historic feel in priority areas. A historic or architectural overlay may be appropriate here, and active farms may be under consideration for conservation easements.

**Intersection of Rt. 4 and Main St**

It is clear that residents from the visioning session generally believe this area of Chichester is the most suitable for development. The "Commercial Village" zone should be given consideration in terms of expansion or possibly alteration to allow for mixed uses and increased density. It could possibly be a "receiving" area for a Transfer of Development Rights. Access management along Rt. 4 should be considered, as was cited by residents at the visioning session.

**South of Towle Mountain Rd**

There was a specific note of a specific field in town that is valued as open space and a nearby potential "cluster" of homes was worrisome to some residents. It seems that when conservation subdivisions are under review that special attention be given to the layout and location of the housing cluster. Site sensitivity needs to be a priority to be sure to protect valued views and characteristics of each parcel.



**Buildout Buildings**

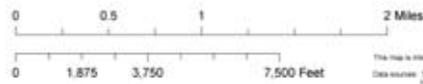
- Single Family Residential
- Non-Residential

**Buildable Land**

**Conservation Lands**

**Wetlands**

**100 year floodplain**



This map is intended for planning purposes only.  
Data source: Town of Chichester, NH GRANIT  
NH DCC, DATEC

Central New Hampshire  
Regional Planning Commission  
28 Commercial Street  
Concord, NH 03301  
603.226.4830  
www.cnhrpc.org



Figure 1. Visioning Session Results



and industry, transportation, natural resources, education and community services. Participants were also then asked to use “sticky dots” to indicate where in town they think more development should go (red dots) as well as where they think development is less suitable (green dots) on the build-out map provided by Central NH Regional Planning Commission (see Figure 1).

During Spring 2009, Central NH Regional Planning Commission will be conducting a series of public workshops with town boards/commissions to discuss alternative scenarios for build-outs, while overlaying those results with other current maps developed in Chichester, including the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) and Wetlands Inventory. Additionally, current zoning will be examined to determine if there should be changes to the zoning ordinances to better suit future development in the community.

Finally, a second community forum will be held in May 2009 to share Master Plan survey results, get input on final build-out scenarios and complete the vision for Chichester’s Master Plan.

### Conclusion

This is just one example of how New Hampshire municipalities are trying to balance achieving their fair share of

workforce housing, while at the same time conserving the open spaces that make New Hampshire a beautiful and unique place to live. The state is offering other programs/opportunities to assist communities in balancing growth with housing needs, including the NH Housing Finance Authority’s Inclusionary Zoning Incentive Program, UNH Cooperative Extension’s Community Profiles and Master Plan Visioning Assistance, as well as regional workforce housing commissions’ support through activities like design charrettes and training sessions.

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<http://extension.unh.edu/GDR/>

NH Housing and Conservation Planning Program  
<http://www.nh.gov/oep/programs/HCPP/about.htm>

NH Inclusionary Zoning Incentive Program  
[http://www.nhhfa.org/rl\\_zoning.cfm](http://www.nhhfa.org/rl_zoning.cfm)

UNH Cooperative Extension Community Profile/Master Plan Visioning Assistance RFA  
<http://extension.unh.edu/CommDev/CPVMPA.htm>

NH Workforce Housing Council  
<http://www.workforcehousingnh.com/>

### About the Author

Michele Gagne is a Community Development Training and Planning Coordinator with the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension. She assists communities with visioning and planning, provides facilitation and meeting management training to non-profits and other community leaders and teaches an undergraduate course in managing community conflict at the University of New Hampshire.

# Economic Growth vs. Economic Development: Are you taking the time to measure changes impacting quality of life?

By Andy Lewis

## What is the Difference between Economic Development and Economic Growth?

Ron Shaffer, the founder of the Center for Community and Economic Development, included an analogy in his book that I often borrow to simply and effectively distinguish between growth and development. Imagine if my son Shawn and I were to attend a family gathering and bumped into Uncle John, whom we hadn't seen in three years. If he were to turn to my son and say, "My but how you have grown," my son's chest would puff out in recognition that someone had noticed his physical, emotional and intellectual growth as a young adult. However, if that same uncle were to turn to me and say the same thing, I would likely take umbrage with the long-lost relative because the implication would be that he recognized the expanding waistline of a middle-aged man.

Shaffer's analogy helps us visualize the argument made by economist Mahbub ul Haq at the World Bank in the 1970s, that existing measures of human progress failed to account for the true purpose of development—to improve people's lives and expand individual human choices. While most economists were content to measure Gross Domestic Product, Dr. Haq, in collaboration with other economists, published the first Human Development Report in 1990. Since that time, the United Nations Development Programme has commissioned over 600 regional, national and sub-national reports in over 140 countries. Each of these reports features a Human Development Index that measures the well being of countries, states, and regions with a ranking of nations.

Although many economic development professionals still use the terms

"economic growth" and "economic development" interchangeably, people are beginning to recognize that they are not synonymous. The emergence of the sustainable development movement has helped differentiate between economic growth and economic development by emphasizing quality of life considerations that are integral components of economic development. However, many fear that the recent economic crisis will shift the focus back to more traditional economic measures, potentially at the expense of quality-of-life considerations.

## Thrive Economic Region Focuses on Quality of Life

Discussions over the well being of communities are not limited to the United Nations. And many of the formulas used to calculate the American Human Development Index were done for large population groups and cannot be used for communities or regions. The phrase "Think global, act local," which first appeared in print in 1915 comes to mind. When the eight county region surrounding the capital city of Madison, Wisconsin, began to organize a regional economic development entity ("Thrive"), they agreed that economic development and quality of life were inextricably linked. Thrive, incorporated in 2007 as a not-for-profit organization, was created with a mission of growing the region's economy in ways that preserve and enhance the quality of life. Unlike many organizations with a similar mission, they also asked the tough questions regarding how they would measure whether or not they were successful. Economic development outcomes are hard enough to quantify, how was the region going to measure quality of life? More importantly, many of the national and state "report cards" did not have data that pertained to regions

or were not comprehensive enough.

## Establishing Quality of Life Benchmarks

To help achieve Thrive's vision of growing the economy in ways that preserve and enhance the quality of life, the Thrive Quality of Life Committee launched a regional survey effort in 2008 to identify the quality of life issues of importance to residents in the Madison Region. The Thrive Quality of Life Committee began work to develop a dashboard of quality of life indicators that could be used for the Madison Region. They started by reviewing a list of more than 120 indicators and used a web survey to prioritize these issues. Based on these prioritized issues, a print survey was developed and distributed to residents in the region.

Results from the regional survey were combined with objective data sources in a report intended to provide benchmarks for the region. This report also served as the foundation for the development of what is hoped to be an annual report on the STATE OF THE REGION. Efforts included the identification of quality-of-life indicators that could be quantified and tracked and other indicators that existed, which greatly influence these key quality-of-life issues for the region.

In December of 2008, the STATE OF THE REGION report was released as a follow-up to the original effort and included a comparison to other similar economic regions. This report merged traditional economic indicators together with quality-of-life indicators to create a unique set of metrics that will help guide and monitor the long-term impacts of the region's collective efforts.

Thrive's objective in producing these

reports was to inform and to stimulate action by any number of individuals and organizations in the region as Thrive moves toward a shared regional vision. Success in monitoring quality of life in the region will be dependent on local individuals and organizations taking ownership of the task of monitoring and tracking these and other quality-of-life indicators. Thrive will need to make a strong effort to share these findings widely and work towards finding partners to assist in tracking their progress in the future. 🏠

## Author's Picks for Further Reading

American Human Development Project

🏠 <http://measureofamerica.org/>

Community Indicators Consortium

🏠 <http://www.communityindicators.net/>

Human Development Reports, United Nations Development Programme

🏠 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/humandev/reports/>

Quality of Life Indicators/Data Sources, Center for Community and Economic Development, University of Wisconsin Extension

🏠 <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/communities/QualityofLifeDataIndicatorsDataSources.cfm>

State of the Madison Region Report *Thrive*

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## About the Author

Andy Lewis is a professor and Community Development Specialist at the Center for Community and Economic Development at the University of Wisconsin Extension.

“Although many economic development professionals still use the terms “economic growth” and “economic development” interchangeably, people are beginning to recognize that they are not synonymous.”

# LULA - Leadership Training in Land Use and Community Conflict



By David Kay

## Providing a Broader Perspective

Conflict based in competing interests over land use is a routine aspect of the public life of most communities across the entire rural to urban spectrum. These interests collide over decisions about real estate development, planning and zoning, resource extraction, farming and farmland preservation, historic resources, brownfield redevelopment, natural resource protection, forest management and many similar topics.

Despite the prevalence of these kinds of conflicts, many of those involved locally lack a broad perspective on the legal systems they are navigating, the larger community decision-making processes in which they participate, the costs of sticking to “the way things have always been done,” or the options for more constructive approaches to decision making. Most suffice with “learning by doing” in the school of hard knocks.

## LULA Curriculum

LULA – the Land Use Leadership Alliance Training – provides current and emerging community leaders with an opportunity to gain a systems perspective on community decision-making about land use issues. Originally developed by Pace University’s Land Use Law Center, LULA’s strength is a curriculum that integrates land-use law, consensus-building skills, and regional stewardship in a highly interactive course experience. LULA contextualizes within a leadership training framework and a land

use topical area many of the approaches and competencies that have long been promoted within the Cooperative Extension and Land Grant University systems under the rubric of “public issues education”.

The primary agenda of the LULA program is to use law and negotiation theory to help local leaders understand that solutions to complex, persistent problems can be reached through authentically collaborative initiatives. LULA asserts that this approach frequently results in better outcomes than those that arise from the typical adversarial processes found in the land use system. The course seeks to build understanding of the potential benefits of collaborative processes on participants’ real world experiences with the traditional processes, and their deep if often only partially articulated awareness of the limitations of those processes. LULA offers local leaders systematic knowledge of a state’s land-use decision-making rules and structures, new tools for negotiation and collaboration, and understanding of how and when the typical land-use decision-making trajectory might be most amenable to innovation involving particular tools or new approaches.

Along with the standardized modules committed to key legal and community decision-making topics, one or more case study and “open component/local resource” time slots are built into each day’s LULA curriculum. These flexible

elements help tailor the curriculum content to the central interests of participants. They may be determined ahead of time by a planning group or emerge during the training itself. The case study also serves as a common point of reference throughout the course.

To increase the effectiveness of each program, LULA is carefully designed to encourage the creation of leadership networks on a regional basis. Definition of the “region” can be creative, but they typically follow administrative and political boundaries and/or naturally integrating features such as watersheds or transportation corridors. What is important for LULA is finding a regional scale that is small enough to activate some sense of shared stake or interdependence and some potential for future networking but is large enough to draw on a variety of local experiences and to foster new relationships.

## The LULA Leadership Participation

Roughly modeling the approach to stakeholder identification and analysis that is part of the LULA curriculum, the trainers partner initially with a core planning group in the region and devote significant time and effort into identifying a diverse group of potential participants for each course. With a target of approximately 30 land-use leaders in mind, individuals are invited to submit an application to participate in the program.

Possible nominees are identified based on both personal characteristics and their ability to represent, or be representative of, important stakeholder groups in the region. A recent LULA covering multiple municipalities in a small rural watershed, for example, included one or more elected officials, code enforcement officers, planning board members, college professors, farmers and other landowners, land developers, economic development directors, real estate agents, community activists, lake association members, and environmentalists, among others.

Appropriately for a training, the invitations aim for diversity and balance in perspectives rather than a comprehensive representation of regional stakeholders.

Within important categories of participants, individual training nominees are preferred if they:

- Have some experience, knowledge and engagement in regional land use issues;
- Are respected among several interest groups locally;
- Are likely to remain active in the community;
- Have the ability and willingness to come to all sessions;
- Can represent their perspectives without being disruptive.

Participants are asked to devote four full days to the LULA sessions over approximately two months. The importance of their participation, and the opportunity cost of four full days for a busy group of people, are acknowledged in several ways including the competitive nomination and selection process, the requirement of participation for all four days, a formal graduation ceremony, and a general policy of zero tuition or other cost for participation.

Of course, keeping the cost of participation to zero implies that a key

“What is important for LULA is finding a regional scale that is small enough to activate some sense of shared stake or interdependence and some potential for future networking but is large enough to draw on a variety of local experiences and to foster new relationships.”

preliminary task of the trainers and core-planning group is fundraising. Costs, funding strategies and funding opportunities vary from one location to the next. Tapping into more than one source has often funded programs. Well over a dozen public and private programs and organizations supported LULA programs through 2008. More than one hundred municipalities have passed cosponsoring resolutions.

### Conclusion

Attracted to both the philosophy and field successes of the Pace University program, Cornell's Community and Rural Development Institute (CaRDI) saw a new opportunity in early 2008 to help realize its land grant mission by forging a partnership with the Land Use Law Center. The goal of the partnership has been to increase collective capacity to deliver more training on an annual cycle and to adapt the LULA program to take full advantage of the differing and complementary strengths of each institution. Most recently, Albany Law School, another of New York's leading centers of training and scholarship on land-use law, has joined the partnership.

More than thirty LULA programs have now been conducted for leaders in three states (New York, New Jersey and Connecticut), with demand still barely in balance with our ability to respond. LULA is now in the process of being introduced with local trainers to additional states including Utah. As with other successful programs, the heartfelt testimonials, formal course evaluations, and longer term indicators of tangible impact have been encouraging.

Perhaps LULA's most important legacy is the more than 2,000 graduates who are maintained in a network representing the public and private segments of many dozens of communities. While these locally influential land-use leaders still do not see eye to eye on many things, they do share a common experience, vocabulary, and shared set of background assumptions on how the land use system does and might function to better serve community needs. 🏠

### Author's Picks for Further Reading

For more information on Pace University and LULA

 [www.law.pace.edu/landuse/](http://www.law.pace.edu/landuse/)

 <http://www.landuseleaders.com/>

For more information on CaRDI's land use programming including LULA

 <http://devsoc.cals.cornell.edu/cals/devsoc/outreach/cardi/programs/land-use/index.cfm>

For more information on Cooperative Extension and Public Issues Education

 <http://www.publicissueseducation.net/>

### About the Author

David Kay is a Senior Extension Associate with the Community and Rural Development Institute in the Department of Development Sociology at Cornell University.



# Local Decision Maker

“GIS has proven to be invaluable as a tool for storing, managing, repackaging, integrating, and visually displaying location-based information and analyses from multiple disciplines directly to our targeted audiences.”

## Plan your future

By Rick Farnsworth, Indraneel Kumar and Christine Nolan

**The Problem**

Critical issues such as too much growth, too little growth, high unemployment, decaying city centers or degraded natural resource bases provide the catalyst for communities to initiate planning. Unfortunately, many planning efforts fall short of original expectations. Competing objectives among stakeholders sidetrack many planning efforts. Insufficient financial resources, especially in rural communities, cut planning efforts short. Nor do completed plans signify success if stakeholders feel divorced from the process or feel their concerns were not addressed. It should be noted that stakeholder participation and buy-in is equally important for implementing the plan.

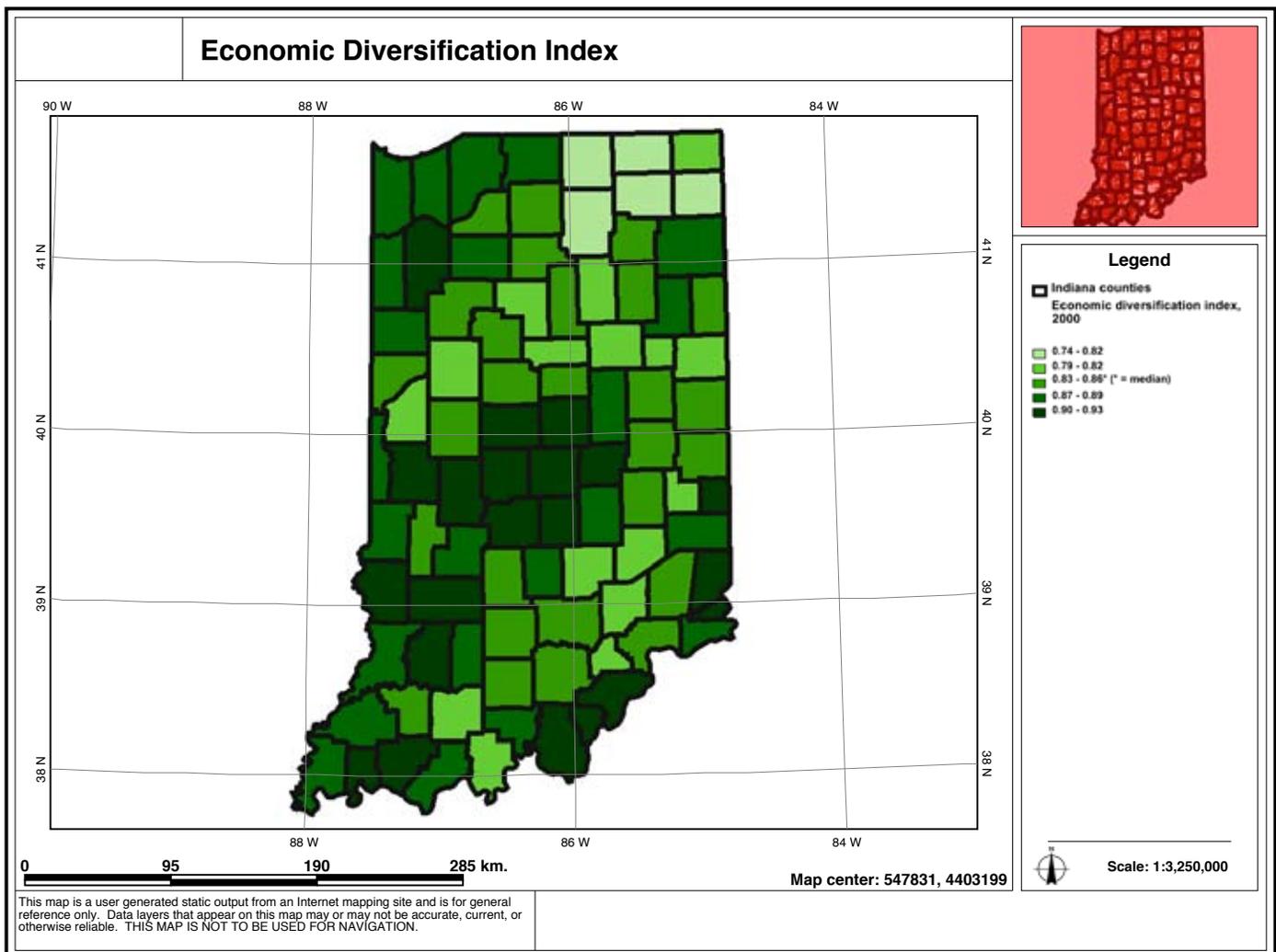
In 2006, the newly-formed Center for the Environment at Purdue University encouraged research and outreach experts to devise ways to emphasize natural resources in the planning efforts of Indiana communities. A diverse group of professionals formed a group and competed successfully for the available funds. Similar to a real planning group, it took about a year for the group to find common ground and an approach combining our different interests and expertise. The end result is Local Decision Maker (LDM), an ambitious program to assist communities in their planning efforts.

**The Program**

Local Decision Maker's (LDM) slogan – Plan Your Future – sets the program's

tone and identifies the audience. Local Decision Maker is for planners employed in county and city planning departments, planning commission members, consultants, natural resource professionals, economic development professionals, education officials, concerned citizens, and other individuals and organizations actively shaping a community's future.

The mission of LDM is to assist Indiana communities in making informed, integrated natural resource and economic development decisions. The LDM program consists of a state-of-the-art, science-based decision support system and support staff to facilitate its use and ongoing development. Any county or community interested in updating part



of its existing comprehensive plan or developing a new plan and private or commercial entities participating in a planning effort can obtain assistance numerous ways. First and foremost, LDM's user-friendly decision support system is publicly available at <http://purdue.edu/ldm>. The team also conducts train-the-trainer workshops and training workshops for local officials and entrepreneurs and provides technical assistance via email and telephone.

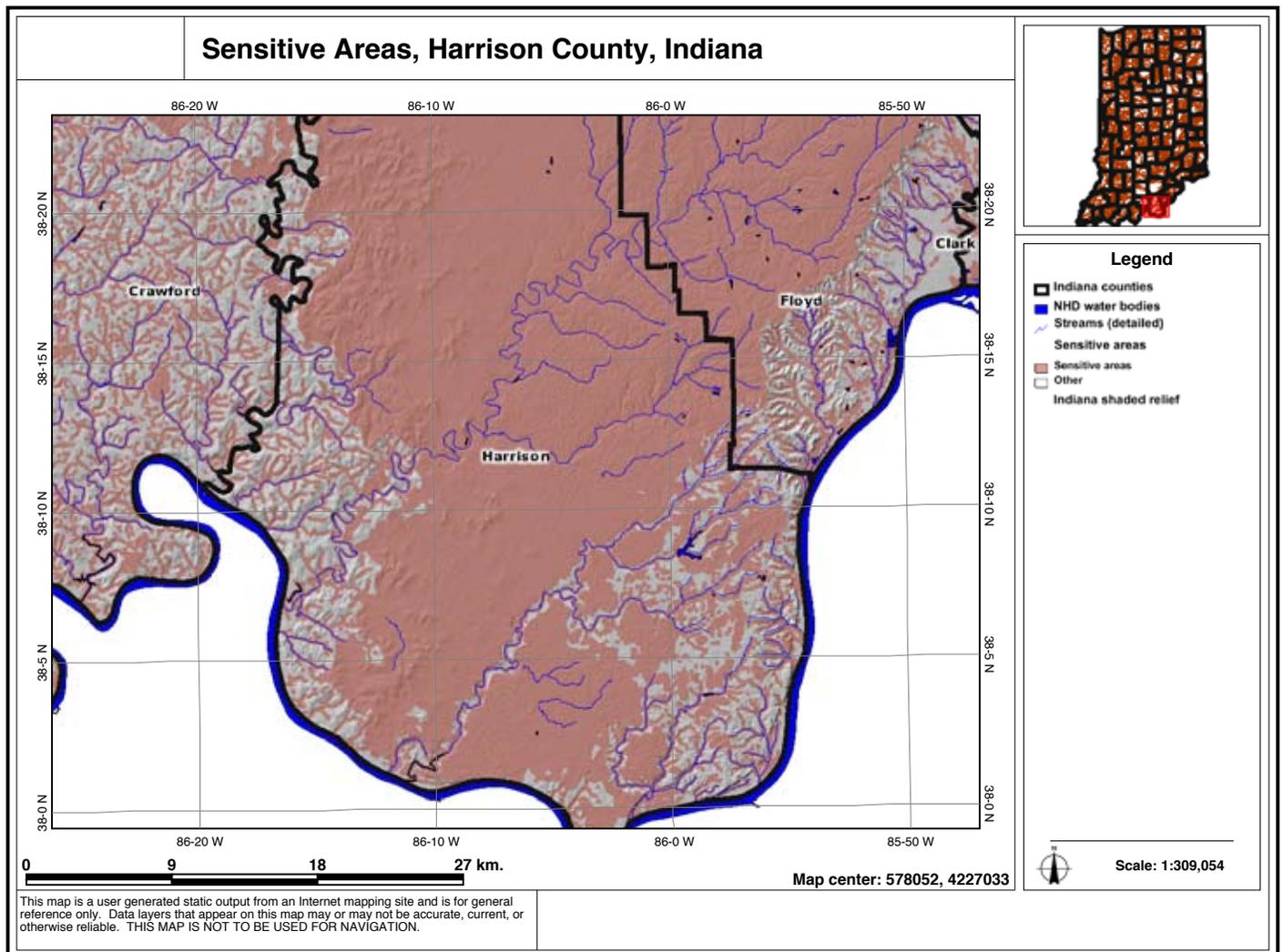
Fully embedded in LDM is the standard comprehensive planning process. A community begins with an assessment of existing conditions, followed by the development of a vision for the future, development and comparison of development strategies, and selection and implementation of the preferred strategy.

Though everything stated thus far sounds similar to other planning programs, several elements of LDM's structure make it unique and contribute to its current popularity. First, as a broad umbrella under which activities fit, the comprehensive planning process has been very useful in attracting and integrating applied research into LDM. Several of these have expanded the content in the education, health, and natural resources sections of inventory and analysis. Sensitive areas, working lands, economic diversity, and tax district layers are just a few of the new analyses conducted by researchers in support of LDM.

The second unique element is the fundamental role that Geographic

Information Systems (GIS) play in LDM. GIS has proven to be invaluable as a tool for storing, managing, repackaging, integrating, and visually displaying location-based information and analyses from multiple disciplines directly to our targeted audiences. It is quite common, for example, to see workshop participants conduct a quick appraisal of their county in relation to surrounding counties by quickly moving through the different categories of inventory and analysis. After this rapid appraisal, they use some of the more specialized GIS tools, such as ID and query, to view and understand the underlying data or create overlays of different layers to extend our basic analyses.

A third feature is the question-and-answer



format embedded in LDM and its use in transferring information and analyses to decision makers (e.g., planners, members of planning committees, consultants). Each question builds upon the prior question, building the decision maker's knowledge base and feeding new information to the point where a science-based, informed decision can be made.

The last characteristic is the team's unwritten goal that LDM users should receive decision-relevant information and results in three to four mouse clicks. More clicks suggest we have not decided exactly what we want the decision maker to know, or subconsciously we want the decision maker to recreate our path of discovery and development.

### Insights

LDM workshops for Indiana's land use extension specialists, local officials, education officials, consultants, county planners, and the pilot counties began in the fall of 2007 and continued through March 2008. The password-protected LDM program changed considerably. The inventory section grew as the team fulfilled requests for more data and analyses. The GIS component also expanded in response to user feedback. Direct connections to commercial map services, email capability, a save function, upload capabilities, and the ability to annotate maps are just a few of the features added.

In May 2008, LDM became available for public use. Workshop and presentation requests continue to increase as do requests to continually expand phase one, inventory and analysis, at the expense of the other phases of planning. Almost every time we conduct an LDM activity, one or more stakeholders will tell us the strength of LDM is its aggregation of data and analyses in a central location and how this improves the efficiency of the overall planning process. Initial concerns about possibly interfering in the private consulting market dissipated quickly as consultants regularly encourage us to focus almost exclusively on one-

stop access to critical data and analyses. Two quotes summarize this value-added element of LDM:

"...As planning director for a rural county in Indiana, I can attest to the importance of having access to a tool such as this program to easily access important information related to our community. Without this tool our community would most likely be required to spend several thousand dollars in order to obtain similar information through the use of a consultant...."

"...I am conducting a Brown-Bag for our local office in Indianapolis regarding the tool in a few weeks. This is really an outstanding resource for planners...."

In addition, requests have grown considerably from inventory-specific groups such as educators and natural resource professionals who want considerably more data and analyses that go beyond the requirements for comprehensive planning. People quickly recognize the savings in time and dollars when data are centrally located.

A second insight is the usefulness of LDM in establishing a consistent, statewide approach to comprehensive planning. Though every plan is unique, based on the availability of local resources and past development, the disparity in planning expertise and funding among communities that greatly influences the final plan is partially offset with LDM.

A third insight that supports continued development of LDM is planning committee membership. Comprehensive planning efforts attract well-qualified participants who devote nights and weekends in the hopes of creating a better future for their communities. They have the ability to process information and analyses and make decisions. LDM empowers them for more-informed decision making quickly and efficiently. Last and certainly not the least is the critical role of land grant institutions

in comprehensive planning. Sound, sustainable development in the future requires a much greater understanding of the interactions between the human and natural worlds and how decisions change the mix of economic, ecologic, and social consequences. Communities welcome input from research and extension specialists in their planning efforts. From our experiences, a two-way communication has significantly improved LDM's usability and acceptance.

### Conclusions

LDM is a work in progress. Over the next two to four years, we will work with the pilot counties and complete phases two through four while continually updating and expanding the inventory and analysis phase. Like the planning process, we will start again. Any group interested in starting their own LDM efforts should go to  <http://purdue.edu/ldm>. The program's components are part of the site's structure and navigation. Almost any web-based GIS service will work. 

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American Planning Association

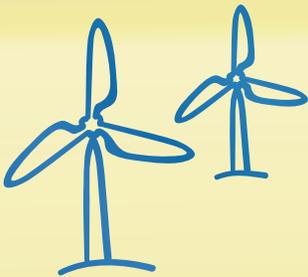
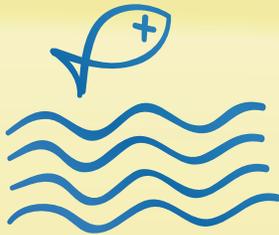
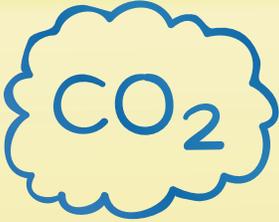
 [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org)

### About the Authors

Rick Farnsworth is the Project Coordinator for the LDM with the Purdue Department of Forestry and Natural Resources.

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# Conservation: A Path to Community Sustainability?

By Dave Shideler

Community sustainability is a long-term approach to economic development that attempts to balance economic, social and environmental concerns. Unlike other economic development strategies that might be issue- or project-focused, sustainability takes a systematic approach to economic development that recognizes the interconnectedness of a community's environment, economy and human capital and so leverages the sum of these assets to achieve the common vision of the community. A long-term perspective and an on-going, long-term planning process are required to succeed, but elected officials and economic developers often possess a short time horizon due to political and other reasons. It is appropriate, then, that support for community sustainability comes from outside the local government and traditional economic development organizations.

Conservation seems ideally suited to cultivate and support community sustainability. At its core, conservation has the requisite long-term perspective because it seeks to preserve the community's natural resources for future generations. Additionally, conservation currently enjoys prominence because of recent natural disasters that were either preventable or mitigated by implementation and maintenance of conservation structures. Funding is also available for conservation, with approximately \$6 billion of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds dedicated to conservation-related projects (Oklahoma Policy Institute, 2009). Urgency and available resources make local conservation a prime candidate for initiating community dialogue and promoting community sustainability.

A partnership between the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts (OACD), Oklahoma Conservation Commission (OCC) and Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service (OCES) has begun to develop tools and educational materials on community sustainability. The program is using economic impact analysis to demonstrate the importance of conservation funding to local communities, with the expectation that such information will help facilitate a dialogue across previously fractionalized groups. Communities can then use this inclusive discussion to move toward long-term planning and sustainability.

*"Urgency and available resources make local conservation a prime candidate for initiating community dialogue and promoting community sustainability."*

## Economic Impact of Conservation Funding

Starting the process toward community sustainability with economic impact analysis makes sense on several levels. One of the reasons that conservation and economic development are often at odds is because the two groups do not have a common vocabulary. Conservationists often point to numbers of species protected, tons of soil preserved, etc. in measuring their progress. Economic developers count jobs sustained or created and dollars of capital investment. Economic impact analysis on conservation dollars provides a way of translating conservation expenditures into units of interest to the economic development community. It also makes explicit the economic linkages between conservation practices and local businesses that supply inputs for the practice implementation, such as cooperatives, construction firms, and nurseries. With the results of the economic impact report, conservationists are empowered to communicate with their economic development counterparts.

Secondly, the economic impact analysis provides information that local conservation districts (CDs) can use to grow the local economy. Output multipliers were generated for each reported practice used in Oklahoma, and these multipliers are reported along with the total economic impact of the practice. Output multipliers are a means of estimating how one economic activity will spur additional activity throughout the local economy. For example, Waste Storage (including septic tanks) had a state multiplier of 1.8; this means that every dollar spent on waste storage generated an additional \$0.80 of economic activity in Oklahoma. This additional economic activity includes the fabrication of the septic tank, drainage pipes, and other components made in the community, as well as the household consumption resulting from the payroll of the septic installers and the factory workers who made the tank. Since the local conservation districts have some

discretion in prioritizing the practices appropriate within each district, choosing practices with higher multipliers will generate higher economic activity for the local community. Such action by CDs is a small but significant step in advancing the practice of community sustainability.

One example of this strategic prioritization involves the practices of Range Planting and Prescribed Grazing (RP/PG) versus Pasture and Hay Planting (PHP). Table 1 compares the multipliers between RP/PG and PHP. RP/PG represents more 'bang for the buck'; this is because the practice requires purchasing indigenous grasses, which will most likely be locally produced. Also, these practices lead to higher value-added agricultural products than hay. If one were to reallocate all \$1.7 million spent in Oklahoma on PHP to RP/PG, more than \$700,000 of additional economic activity would be generated. This is illustrated in the last column of Table 1.

## Next Steps Toward Community Sustainability

In addition to the state report, we are developing and distributing a report that details the economic impact of each conservation district's expenditures on the county economy. These reports will detail the levels of funding by practice across all programs, illustrate the multiplier effect associated with these practices, and interpret the results for the district staff. An Extension Fact Sheet and in-service training for conservation district staff are being developed in conjunction with this local report. These training materials will educate CD staff on how the reports were generated and how to use the reports to initiate a community-wide dialogue for planning purposes.

## Conclusion

While community sustainability encompasses more than just conservation, conservation is an issue that can motivate communities to begin thinking about sustainability. Tools that are being developed in cooperation with OACD and OCC will enable conservation districts to demonstrate short-term economic benefits and equip them to engage the broader community in longer-term planning. Once the community dialogue has begun, an expectation exists that other community issues will also be addressed to cover the economic and social dimensions of community sustainability.

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William Grunkemeyer and Myra Moss. 1999. Key Concepts in Sustainable Development. In *The Web Book of Regional Science* ([www.rrri.wvu.edu/regscweb.htm](http://www.rrri.wvu.edu/regscweb.htm)), ed., Scott Loveridge. Morgantown, WV: Regional Research Institute, West Virginia University.

Sustainable Development Initiative, Ohio State University Extension – Community Development Program

<http://sustainabledevelopment.osu.edu/>

## About the Author

Dave Shideler is an Assistant Professor and Extension Economist for Oklahoma State University.

	Multiplier	Total Impact if all PHP were RP/PG
Range Planting/Prescribed Grazing	2.1839	\$3,741,455
Pasture and Hay Planting	1.7652	\$3,024,139
Difference		\$717,316

Table 1. Comparison of Economic Impacts

# The Tourism Connection: Contributing to Sustainable Community Development in the 21st Century

By Steven Burr

Tourism is the number one industry in many countries and the fastest-growing economic sector in terms of foreign exchange earnings and job creation. Tourism is one of the world's most important sources of employment, stimulates enormous investment in infrastructure - most of which helps improve the living conditions of local people - and provides governments with substantial tax revenues that fund services for both visitors and residents. In addition, intercultural awareness and personal friendships potentially fostered through tourism are powerful forces for improving international understanding and contributing to peace among all the nations of the world.

The World Tourism Organization defines tourism as the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited. Tourism, as a development industry, relies on the development and utilization of natural, historical, cultural, and human resources in the local environment as tourist attractions and destinations. Tourism creates recreational uses for natural and human-made amenity resources and converts these into income-producing assets. As such, there is great interest in tourism development to help diversify and stabilize rural economies.

Travel and tourism combine segments from other industries that provide goods and services demanded while traveling away from home, such as transportation, food and beverage, lodging, and amusement and recreation. Effects of tourism are also felt in manufacturing, construction,

real estate, government, public utilities, agriculture, and other services.

## Emerging Tourism Trends

There are a number of continuing and emerging tourism trends that are important to understand. One is the evolution of the importance of experience. Our society has basically transitioned to an experience-based economy, as today's travelers are seeking new and unique

clean air and water, providing habitat for wildlife, and preserving biological diversity.

Another trend involves tourism and our public lands, a powerful combination, as in Leisure Travel and America's Great Outdoors! Public lands will continue to increase in importance as a primary destination for a growing number of outdoor recreation activities and tourism businesses centered on highly scenic landscapes and natural resources.

Many rural communities have attractive amenity resources, and opportunities exist for the development of a variety of tourism-related businesses that can enhance "Destination Tourism." Today's tourists are willing to pay for quality experiences, services, and products, but there must be enough activities and places to visit. The challenge is to focus on development of compatible, dispersed tourist businesses that will help vitalize a local economy, and to develop a quality package of activities and experiences to

both attract visitors and convince them to make an extended trip. Natural allies for such tourism development are outdoor recreation, nature tourism, agricultural tourism, and cultural-heritage tourism.

There has been a steady public interest in the use of our public lands and natural resources for outdoor recreation and nature tourism. Outdoor recreation remains among the top purposes for leisure travel in the U.S. (Figure 1) and almost 80 percent of tourists say scenery is one of their top considerations in selecting a destination for travel. More than three out of four Americans participate in active outdoor recreation



"self-fulfilling" experiences. Traditional tourism activities are being augmented by adventure travel, recreation transportation (bikes, OHVs, snowmobiles, watercraft), nature tourism and eco-tourism, wildlife viewing and birdwatching, agricultural tourism, and cultural heritage tourism.

The trend of our changing societal values with respect to the development and use of our natural resources is also emerging. More and more emphasis is being placed on the value of amenity resources for such things as scenery and aesthetics, opportunities for a diversity of recreation experiences, and ecological services for

each year and in the process spend money, create jobs, and support local communities when they participate in outdoor recreation activities. Simple, healthy outdoor activities, such as hiking, biking, camping, or wildlife viewing generate enormous economic power and fuel a far-reaching “ripple effect” that touches many of the nation’s major economic sectors (Source: The Active Outdoor Recreation Economy, Outdoor Industry Foundation, Fall 2006).

Nature tourism is often considered as one component of outdoor recreation. Nature tourism, also referred to as ecotourism, is discretionary travel to natural areas that conserve environmental, social, and cultural values, while generating an economic benefit to the local community. Nature tourists spend time and money to experience nature and the outdoors and learn more about a particular destination with a concern for minimum impact and sustainability.

There has been an increasing interest in experiencing the activities of the farm or ranch for agricultural tourism, or Agritourism, defined as the act of visiting a working farm or ranch or any agricultural operation or business for the purposes of enjoyment, education, and active involvement in a variety of activities and experiences. Agritourism is a commercial enterprise not necessarily part of traditional farming/ranching activities, which generates supplemental income for owner-operators through such endeavors as the accommodation of tourists, through heritage and cultural programs, by

offering hunting and fishing leases, and through horse packing or other guided trips (Agri-Business Council of Oregon, 2003).

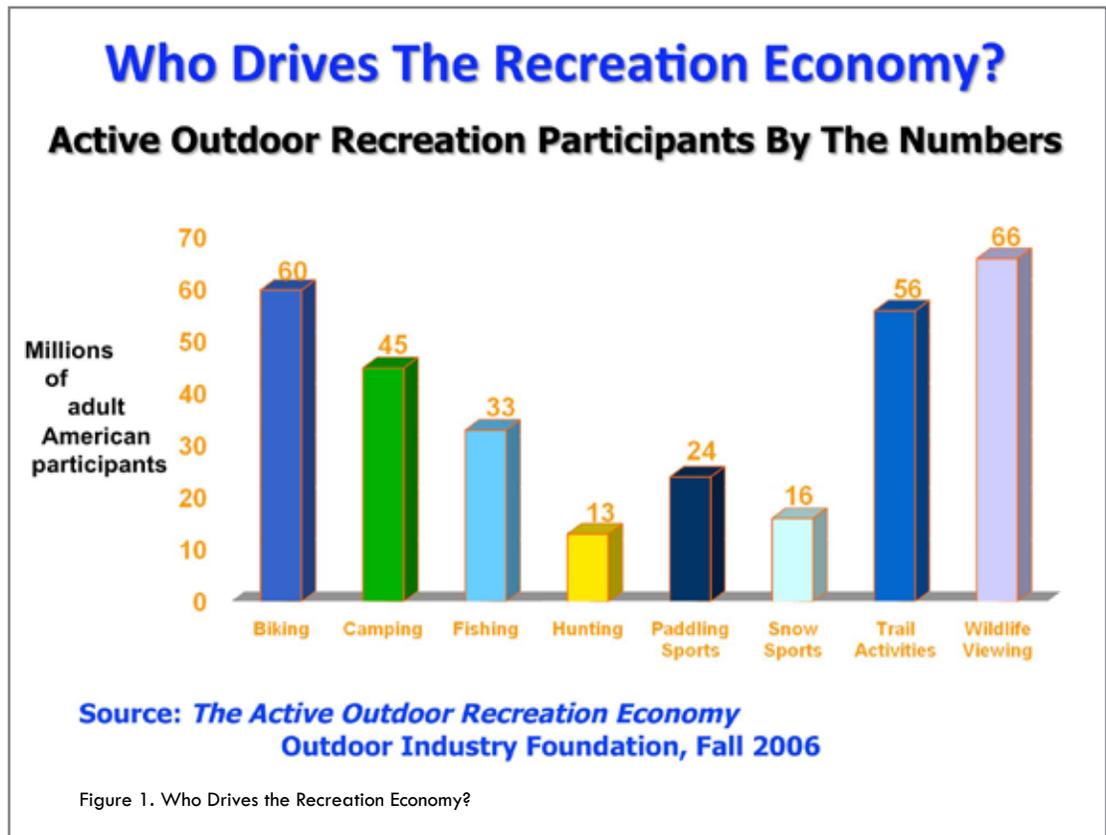
There has also been a growing interest in our significant cultural and historic resources for cultural heritage tourism, defined as discretionary travel to areas rich in significant cultural and heritage resources worthy of preservation. Cultural Heritage Tourism conserves local social and cultural values, while generating an economic benefit to the local community.

**Sustainable Tourism**

Additionally, it is important to consider tourism development in a sustainable manner, with approaches that are environmentally sound, economically viable, and socially responsible and acceptable. When utilizing tourism for community development, it is important to

weigh benefits and costs - to determine what the benefits and costs will be for a community and whether the associated costs are acceptable. Ideally, costs can be minimized while maximizing benefits. Tourism development always brings change to a community and there are potentially negative social and environmental impacts. Consequently, because of tourism development’s potentially exploitative tendency, such development is being approached with a sense of caution. The critical challenge is to not degrade environmental resources nor negatively exploit local human and cultural resources, in order that these resources may be maintained for present and future generations.

What is sustainable tourism? First, do no harm! This is basic to good destination stewardship. Sustainable tourism does not abuse its product—the destination.



It seeks to avoid the “loved to death” syndrome. Community stakeholders anticipate development pressures and apply management techniques that sustain natural habitats, heritage sites, scenic appeal, and local culture. Sustainable tourism respects local culture, heritage, and traditions. It informs both visitors and hosts, can create community pride, and enhances the visitor experience. It can benefit residents economically through spending, jobs and incomes, tax revenues, and becomes an incentive for wise destination stewardship, supporting integrity of place, preserving the character of the locale, and raising local perceived value of assets.

In addition, sustainable tourism aims for quality, not quantity. It is measured not by sheer numbers of visitors, but rather by their length of stay at destination, the distribution of their spending in a community, and the quality of their visitor experience. Sustainable tourism builds on “sense of place,” emphasizing the distinctiveness of locale and benefitting both visitors and residents alike. Sustainable tourism conserves resources, and environmentally-aware travelers favor businesses that minimize their impact through pollution abatement and control, waste reduction and recycling, energy and water conservation, less use of landscaping and other chemicals, and non-excessive nighttime lighting.

Sustainable tourism is synergistic. All the elements of the environment and socio-cultural setting together create the tourist experience, and thus it is richer than the sum of its parts and is appealing to visitors with diverse interests. It involves community, businesses, civic groups, and residents, promoting and providing a distinctive, authentic experience for visitors.

Best chances for success in sustainable tourism development efforts come from professionals and volunteers working in tourism development following an approach that focuses on the principles

“Sustainable tourism builds on “sense of place,” emphasizing the distinctiveness of locale and benefitting both visitors and residents alike.”

of sustainable development in all development efforts and initiatives. Especially important is the facilitation of resident involvement, participation in decision-making, and local control in development.

Some Principles of Sustainable Tourism Development:

- Follows ethical principles;
- Involves the local population and gives residents an element of control;
- Is undertaken with equity in mind;
- Is low in impact, small in scale, and careful in progress;
- Is appropriate and sensitive to the local natural and socio-cultural environment; and
- Is readily integrated into the existing social and economic life of the community.

### Conclusion

Tourism and outdoor recreation can be important components of community development, as a part of the economic mix. The community and economic development challenge for many rural communities involves achieving a balance with small business development, manufacturing, farming and ranching, mining and energy development, and tourism and outdoor recreation, with a focus on sustainable development and the use of our natural and socio-cultural resources. 🏡

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Utah State University Institute for Outdoor Recreation and Tourism

<http://extension.usu.edu/iort/htm/resources>

### About the Author

Steven W. Burr, Ph.D. is currently an Associate Professor of Recreation Resources Management, Director of the Institute for Outdoor Recreation and Tourism, and Extension Specialist in Outdoor Recreation and Tourism at Utah State University. He is also the current chair of the National Extension Tourism (NET) Design Team.

# Creative Industries Promote Economic Growth

*A Report from the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices*

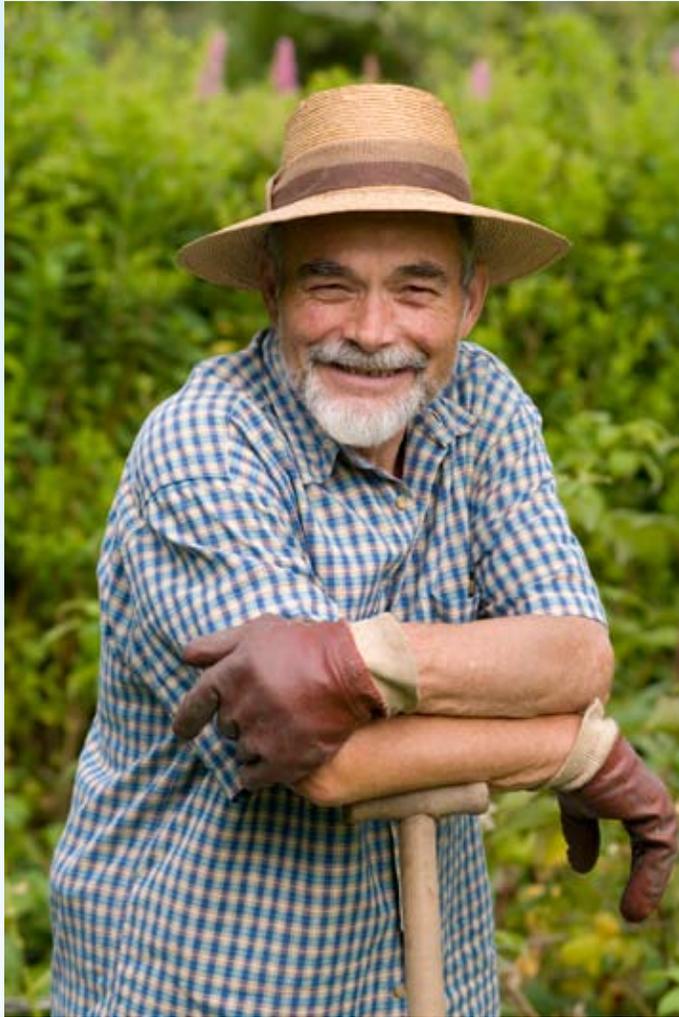


Fostering the arts and culture sector has played a vital role in the economic development of states and regions, and provides a viable strategy for contributing to rural vitality, according to a new report from the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center). Arts and culture-related industries, collectively known as “creative industries,” provide direct economic benefits to states and communities by creating jobs, attracting new investments, generating tax revenues and stimulating tourism and consumer purchases.

The report, *Arts & the Economy: Using Arts and Culture to Stimulate State Economic Development* (<http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0901ARTSANDECONOMY.PDF>) provides concrete examples from states and rural areas across the country, that can help regional development planners and business leaders incorporate the arts and culture into their long-term economic development strategies. To realize the full potential of the creative industries, the report suggests a number of actions, including:

- Performing a recurring audit of state arts assets;
- Incorporating creative industries into planning;
- Developing strategies to support the arts and culture sector;
- Ensuring creative industries are included in community development plans; and
- Assessing the impact the arts and culture sector can have in enhancing tourism.

The report is the sixth in a series (<http://www.nasaa-arts.org/nasaanews/nga.shtml>) of publications that document how the arts can help states develop additional economic opportunities. The series is produced by the NGA Center (<http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.50aeae5ff70b817ae8ebb856a11010a0>) with funding support from the National Endowment for the Arts (<http://www.nea.gov/>) and research assistance from the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (<http://www.nasaa-arts.org/>).



“The farm is dedicated to growing nutritious food for the hungry and teaching the hungry to grow their own food for personal use or for sale.”

# Shalom Farm:

## Growing Food, Family and Friends

By Jonah Fogel and Rev. David Cooper

The Shalom Farm is a faith-based food-security project, initiated in the spring of 2008. The project was developed in a partnership between the United Methodist Urban Ministries of Richmond (UMUMR), a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization, and Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE).

The goals of the project are to increase access to healthy foods in the inner city, build community, and improve the self-sufficiency of those involved.

Richmond, Virginia, has a rich and diverse history. Many great Americans have

connections to the place such as Edgar Allen Poe, Patrick Henry, Maggie L. Walker, and Arthur Ashe. A patchwork of neighborhoods has emerged over time. In some areas of the city, high poverty exists which often leads to the following problems: limited access to fresh, healthy

foods; residents with higher incidence of nutrition related diseases like obesity and diabetes; high crime rates; and poor school performance. Considering these issues, and mindful of substantially increased demands on food banks, UMUMR and VCE have teamed up along with three low-income neighborhoods to bring Shalom Farm into being.

Shalom Farm is composed of three interrelated parts. First, a 780-acre United Methodist camp in rural Goochland County (forty minutes west of Richmond) is host to the Shalom Farm site. Ground will be broken in March 2009 on two acres. This farm site uses a high-yield design to grow ten crops producing 16,000 pounds of fresh nutritious food for the hungry. Volunteers will staff the farm and they come from a variety of backgrounds and locations including area churches, synagogues, mosques, and civic, government, NGOs and various community organizations. The crops and growing techniques used at the farm were chosen to be easily replicable by volunteers looking to create gardens of their own in the inner city or elsewhere. The farm is dedicated to growing nutritious food for the hungry and teaching the hungry to grow their own food for personal use or for sale.

Second, Virginia Cooperative Extension is developing an educational curriculum to teach children and adults alike about gardening, nutritious eating, and food preservation. The curriculum is a train-the-trainer model, meaning that community volunteers can be taught to be instructors. The curriculum being developed is for use with Shalom Farm participants and other similar projects within Virginia.

The youth curriculum is being designed with public school students in mind. Learning objectives of the educational program are coordinated with the state's standardized testing benchmarks, known as the Standards of Learning. UMUMR has

formed partnerships with three inner-city schools to offer after-school programming and camp experiences at the Shalom Farm. Through this partnership, Shalom Farm will provide eighty youth (and their parents) exposure to the curriculum in 2009-2010 school year.

Third, the Shalom Farm project uses an asset-based community development (ABCD) model called Communities of Shalom to catalyze neighborhood empowerment. Asset-Based Community Development was originally created by the Community Development Program at Northwestern University's Institute for Policy Research. Proponents of the approach focus on helping citizens come together and identify strategies to solve their own problems; using the skills and talents available amongst the neighborhood's residents; and better utilizing outside resources.

In Hebrew, the word shalom has multiple meanings, including "well-being." The Communities of Shalom model was developed by the United Methodist Church as a positive and holistic community-driven response to the riots in Los Angeles, California, in 1992. Now Drew University of Madison, New Jersey, serves as the international resourcing and training center for Communities of Shalom and continues to support and expand the program. Over ninety Shalom Zones (sites) exist across the U.S. and Africa.

In Metro Richmond, UMUMR currently employs the Communities of Shalom model with issues outside of food security impacting issues such as racial reconciliation. One existing and two emerging Communities of Shalom (of which there are a total of ten in Richmond) have already agreed to participate in the Shalom Farm project and look forward

to establishing community gardens or cooking programs in their neighborhoods.

Food security is an increasingly important issue across the country, and food itself continues to be an engaging and powerful force in bringing people together. Since its inception in 2008, the Shalom Farm has gathered an impressive array of community supporters including such organizations as the United Way and the Central Virginia Food Bank. The Shalom Farm will begin delivering its healthful social, economic, physical, and spiritual benefits to Metro Richmond in 2009 and beyond. 🏠

#### Authors' Picks for Further Reading

Asset-based Community Development

🏠 <http://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/abcd/>

Communities of Shalom

🏠 <http://www.communitiesofshalom.org/>

Food Security

🏠 <http://www.foodsecurity.org/>

#### About the Authors

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“The Communities of Shalom model was developed by the United Methodist Church as a positive and holistic community-driven response to the riots in Los Angeles, California, in 1992.”

# Rural Farmers' Markets: Challenges and Strategies

By Amy L. Meier

## Introduction

A farmers' market can be a major event for a small, rural community. It can even provide a venue for community development. However, organizing a farmers' market in rural communities poses a unique set of challenges. This article brings to light barriers to farmers' markets commonly found in rural contexts and offers strategies that can lead to a successful farmers' market. Strategies are drawn from experiences with a farmers' market in a small, remote, high-desert community in central Nevada.

## Organizational Structure

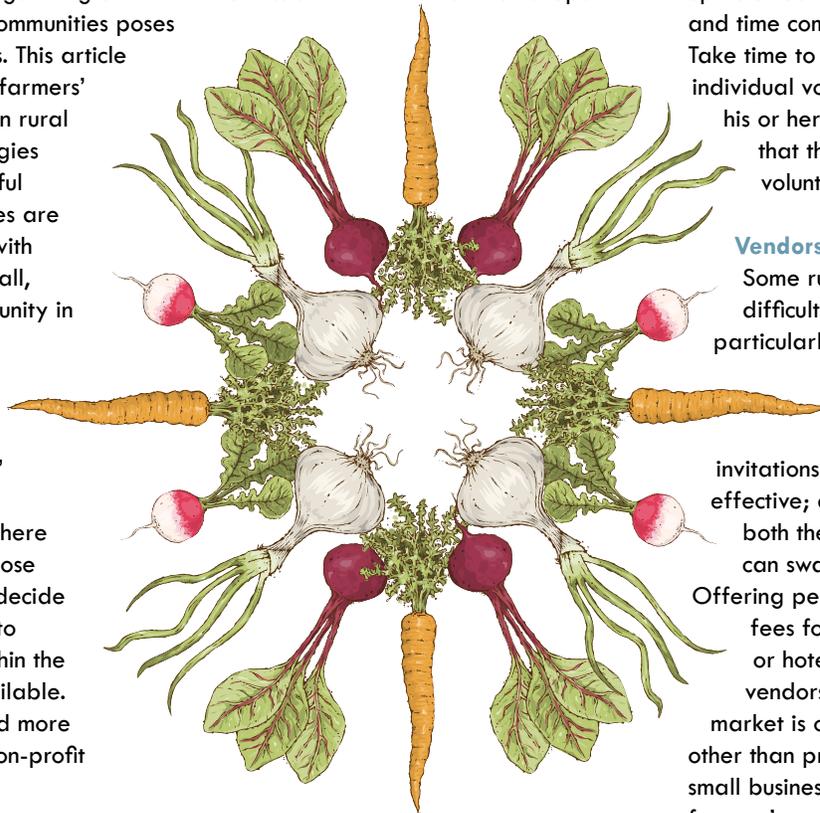
It is important for farmers' market groups to form an organizational structure. There are several options to choose from and the group must decide which option allows them to accomplish their goals within the limits of the resources available. There are tax benefits and more fundraising options to a non-profit organization.

However, this requires a significant amount of paperwork and understanding of IRS requirements. Some groups prefer to rest under the umbrella of a larger non-profit organization. This eliminates a perhaps daunting level of bureaucracy and possible liability insurance concerns but also may place certain constraints on the group. Some farmers' markets are tied in with local Cooperative Extension Master Gardener or 4-H programs, while others are actual growers' cooperatives.

## Mission

Whatever the structure of a farmers' market group, it is essential that it have a mission. A mission and objectives are important because they keep the farmers' market focused, offer something to

evaluate against, and enhance publicity. The mission statement should explain the goal of the farmers' market and drive every aspect of the group. For example, the mission of the Tonopah



Farmers' Market is to promote economic development, encourage healthy eating habits, and increase the quality of life for residents of local and surrounding communities.

## Volunteers

Long-term volunteers who contribute their time, knowledge and passion develop skills that increase leadership capacity in their community while creating a vibrant farmers' market. Identifying program needs and designing volunteer roles should take place prior to recruiting volunteers. Word-of-mouth and volunteer kick-off events are very effective ways to recruit volunteers, particularly in small towns where there may not be a local radio station or even a daily newspaper.

Oftentimes, people are hesitant to volunteer because they don't realize how important their role is or they don't know what tasks need to get done, so breaking up volunteer jobs into specific duties and time commitments is recommended. Take time to discover what drives each individual volunteer in order to cater to his or her motivations and help ensure that they remain as long-term volunteers.

## Vendors

Some rural markets may have difficulty drawing in vendors, particularly when distances are far and there are a small number of customers. Rather than a form letter, personal invitations to potential vendors can be effective; and explaining the benefits to both the grower and the community can sway a vendor to participate. Offering perks such as reduced vendor fees for local "Mom & Pop" vendors or hotel discounts for out-of-town vendors can also help. If a farmers' market is open to vendors selling items other than produce, consider inviting small business owners. They can use the farmers' market as a venue to promote their business. At the Tonopah Farmers' Market, a masseuse stirred up future customers by bringing her massage table, offering massages and setting up appointments.

## Customers

There are several ways to increase the number of customers at a farmers' market. First, consider the time and day that will work best for your vendors and draw in customers. Conduct research to assess which days other farmers' markets run in the area and choose a different day so that vendors can go on a circuit. Encourage local business owners to participate by holding your market on a day that most businesses are closed. Residents of Tonopah typically go out of

town on the weekends, so in order to draw in local customers the market was held on a weekday. It is best to locate the market on a main road, which is visible from afar, with easy parking, shade, and room to expand as needed. The Tonopah Farmers' Market has become a weekly tradition for local residents and a place for tourists to stop on their way through town. Special events that promote community cohesion, intergenerational interaction, and socialization have proven to be big crowd pleasers. A large, permanent sign and any activity at the market site attract people.

## Marketing

Marketing is very important to a farmers' market. Word-of-mouth is invaluable in small town settings, so find the local chatterbox and get their support for the market. Newspapers can generate attendance at the market in several ways. Feature stories and editorials ensure you are reaching a wide audience and will further enhance the power of your paid advertising. The Tonopah Farmers' Market sold ad spots to businesses and placed them on a poster advertising the market. This gave extra exposure to local businesses and was a fundraiser for the market while advertising it in the process. A local restaurant used farmers' market placemats, promoting the market to both locals and tourists. A radio ad enticed new organic vendors and reminded customers about the farmers' market.

## How to Spend Money

Money from grants, vendor fees, or fundraisers is well spent on enhancing the market site, advertising, or staffing. Adding shade structures, picnic tables, or electricity can attract vendors and customers. Advertising is also essential to attracting customers and new vendors. Some farmers' markets pay market managers a stipend. Volunteers are priceless and should also be appreciated. In Tonopah, a Volunteer Celebration was held with dinner and small tokens of appreciation for everyone.

## Evaluation

Finally, evaluating the farmers' market cannot be forgotten. This should be ongoing throughout the market season and after. Use the market's mission statement as the evaluation criteria, and then use the findings to make the market better the following season. Crowd counting, surveys, and digital photos are evaluation tools for farmers' markets. Get volunteers involved to help collect data, and your local Extension Educator to help with analysis. Reports to local government, supportive organizations, volunteers, and the general public can be given to spur future support and enthusiasm for the farmers' market.

## Conclusion

Farmers' markets can contribute greatly to community development in rural areas. Through careful planning, dedicated volunteers, and continuous assessment, strategies can be implemented to successfully meet the challenges facing rural farmers' markets.

## Resources and References

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National Sustainable Agricultural Information Service

<http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/farmmrkt.html>

Ostrom, M. and Lyons, Z. (2007). Washington State Farmers Market Manual. Washington State Department of Agriculture. AGR PUB 200-189. Access online: <http://smallfarms.wsu.edu/marketing/FMM1.pdf>

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## About the Author

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“Word-of-mouth and volunteer kick-off events are very effective ways to recruit volunteers, particularly in small towns where there may not be a local radio station or even a daily newspaper.”



# Earth, Wind, Fire: Preparing for Bio-energy Opportunities in Wisconsin



By Andrew Dane

**E**arth, Wind, Fire: Preparing for Bio-energy Opportunities in Wisconsin is an outreach initiative developed by University of Wisconsin-Extension educators in the northwest part of the state. Northwest Wisconsin, an area roughly 120 miles by 120 miles in size, is a region rich in natural resources. The landscape transitions from mostly agriculture and scattered woods in the south to thick forests to the north. Rivers, lakes, and wetlands are found throughout the region and support a robust tourist economy. Agriculture, forestry, manufacturing, education, and healthcare related industries are also key contributors to the regional economy.

The University of Wisconsin-Extension, in partnership with local government, is located in each of the twelve counties that comprise the region. UW-Extension also operates out of four 4-year campuses and one 2-year campus, as well as two agricultural research stations. UW-Extension has been a trusted partner for the region's communities working on agriculture, youth, family, community, and economic development issues for nearly a century.

In 2006, in response to widespread grassroots interest in renewable energy, UW-Extension organized a series of workshops and conferences covering wind, solar, and bio-energy. Over 400 individuals, businesses, and organizations learned about these renewable energy technologies, their potential benefits, and their drawbacks. By 2007, a set of common issues and opportunities related to energy had begun to emerge across the region. For example, in Polk County, local elected officials had begun to identify their strengths and assets related to renewable energy development. In Barron County, a local economic development corporation had begun promoting renewable energy as a green jobs strategy. Farming- and forestry-related businesses had also begun to look more closely at renewable energy, in particular bio-energy, as a potential source of income.

While these types of opportunities had begun to surface across the region, a set of concerns arose as well. Natural resource professionals began questioning and researching the sustainability of bio-energy development, including its impact on soil, wildlife, and water quality.

Existing forest industries began to express concern that bio-energy development might negatively impact their business profitability by driving feedstock prices too high.

UW-Extension educators, specialists, and researchers responded to these emerging issues by developing an innovative regional initiative with a catchy title: Earth, Wind, Fire: Bio-energy Opportunities for Wisconsin. The purpose of the initiative is to work with regional stakeholders to address the social, environmental, and economic issues associated with the development of bio-energy as well other renewable energy technologies. The project is a catalyst for initiating local and regional conversations aimed at providing answers so that leaders make informed decisions regarding the economic, land-use, and human impacts associated with bio-energy development.

The initiative began by identifying and convening key renewable energy stakeholders including farmers, forest industries, conservationists, utilities, and community leaders in a series of four roundtable discussions held across

the region. The following themes were identified through those discussions:

- Bio-energy projects should not be a “surprise.” Developers and permitting agencies must have a transparent process to involve the public.
- Public agencies and developers need to communicate effectively to avoid problems. Communication needs to happen early in the project cycle and should be open, clear, honest, and concise.
- Bio-energy will only be developed and used, ultimately, if it makes economic sense. Green energy incentives and policy will drive bio-energy development.
- Local elected officials and government agencies must do their homework; they must be proactive and learn about the social, environmental, and economic impacts of alternative energy projects before they’re on one’s doorstep.
- Long-term planning is important to ensure the sustainability of the feedstock resources. Systems must be put in place to track impacts over time

Information from the roundtables was used to develop four renewable energy forums held during Spring 2008. The forums not only addressed the themes outlined above, but they also provided an opportunity to engage local leaders. Local businesses and farmers presented their own projects, including what worked and what did not. Local elected officials shared their own experiences developing energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. Feedback from over 300 participants at the forums indicated a strong desire to get out and see local projects first hand, to continue networking around renewable energy topics, and to learn more about financing opportunities. The next phase of the initiative was designed to address those objectives.

From late spring through the fall of 2008, UW-Extension organized two large renewable energy tours visiting fifteen hydro, solar, wind, and bio-energy projects within the region. The field tours were very well attended by business and community leaders eager to learn more from their innovative neighbors and counterparts from across the region.

In the fall of 2008, a bio-energy workshop at the Spooner Ag Research Station provided an opportunity to learn about bio-energy technologies and conservation challenges. Farmers, utilities, conservationists, greenhouse growers, and others also learned about and had the opportunity to see and touch alternative crops like miscanthus, switch grasses, and hybrid poplar tree species. More recently, UW-Extension organized a business-to-business renewable energy roundtable, developed four renewable energy case studies, authored a regional survey of 150 public institutions to better understand their current demand for energy, and organized multiple grants and project-financing workshops.

Results of the Earth, Wind, Fire initiative include the formation of several county committees focused on developing municipal energy plans and policies. Many of these same communities, working with UW-Extension, recently received State Office of Energy Independence grants to further develop and implement their energy plans. On the business side, several projects have been influenced by the initiative. One community is currently working on a collaborative digester project, a concept they learned about and discussed at one of the energy forums. Several other types of projects have resulted from the initiative as well. For example, a large utility, after learning about and seeing the potential for short rotation woody biomass crops at the Spooner Ag Station workshop, began working with UW-Extension to develop further studies after announcing their plans to convert their local power plant to

run on 100% biomass.

## Conclusion

The Earth, Wind, Fire initiative was developed to respond to a set of common emerging issues related to renewable energy development in northwest Wisconsin. The project was implemented through a loose and growing network of UW-Extension educators, businesses, local government entities, farmers, and forest industries. The organizers of the project readily recognized the need for a networked approach. The complexity of the issues necessitates an iterative approach based on on-going project evaluation and multiple perspectives beyond those of the UW-Extension system. By refining and adjusting the initiative over time, UW-Extension has been able to meet the rapidly changing needs of the communities with which we work. By linking key stakeholders including business, natural resource professionals, and farming and forestry industries, the initiative has stimulated important discussions related to the future use of our region’s farms and forests and their ability to provide for locally-generated, clean, renewable energy. 

## Author’s Picks for Further Reading

Wisconsin’s Bioenergy Forum

 [www.bioenergyforum.com](http://www.bioenergyforum.com)

Agricultural Resource Marketing Center

 [www.agmrc.org](http://www.agmrc.org)

University of Wisconsin Extension Bio-Energy and Bio-Economy Team

 <http://bio.uwex.edu/>

## About the Author

Andrew Dane is an Associate Professor of Community Resource Development with University of Wisconsin – Extension.

# Environmental Education:

## Forests for Today and Tomorrow

By Marsha S. Moorehead



It's not like any other place: rolling hills, crooked creeks, prime hunting and fishing, friendly folks, and lots of trees! Welcome to Clay County, Alabama, where more than 80 percent of the land is forest.

Trees paint a beautiful landscape, but they also help clean water, improve air quality, become useful products, and provide jobs.

### The Lay of the Land

Clay County, located in east central Alabama, lies in the Appalachian foothills and has about 14,000 residents. Ashland and Lineville, the only two incorporated towns in the county, have populations of about 2000. While three scenic state highways wind through the county, there are no four-lane roads. It is the home county of Alabama's current governor, Bob Riley. Rich natural resources abound, with parts of Mt. Cheaha State Park, Talladega National Forest, and Cheaha Wilderness area located here. Portions of the Odum and Pinhoti Scout trails also run through the county. Clay County is bordered on the east by Lake Wedowee, a beautiful 10,000 acre lake considered one of the best fishing lakes in the state.

While the Talladega National Forest stretches across a large portion of western Clay County, the majority of the forestland is privately owned. It's not surprising that forest-related industry is the county's largest industry. It is the lifeblood of our economy. The logging industry is a major employer as is the cabinet industry. In fact, the county is home to several family-owned cabinet

companies and other forest product industries.

### Clay County Forestry Planning Committee

For more than 20 years, the Clay County Forestry Planning Committee has been the driving force behind the county's natural resource management. Their mission is: to promote the stewardship of renewable forest resources including wildlife habitat on private forest lands; to protect the environment; and to increase public understanding of all benefits of sustainable forests. County committees are a part of the State Forestry Planning Committee, also known as the Alabama Natural Resources Coordinating Council. Local committees use a partnership approach that includes Extension agents and private landowners. They identify natural resource-related problems and issues and then coordinate, facilitate, and deliver programs addressing those needs. They assist forest landowners through forestry and wildlife education, field tours, and training sessions.

Committee members have a passion for both the outdoors and natural resources preservation. As private landowners, members implement best management practices, and their hard work has not gone unrecognized. The Clay County Forestry Planning Committee has won numerous awards for their work. They were recently recognized as the State Outstanding County Natural Resources Council for exemplary programs on improving natural resource management. Individual members have also received state, regional, and national awards.

### Outreach Activities

The environmental message doesn't stop within the committee. The committee has worked to increase public understanding of forests and environmental stewardship. These efforts have included news articles, public tours, and educational

programs. This commitment to teach sound environmental practices, land management, wildlife management, and timber production led to two State Tree Tours. The tours, each attended by nearly 100 people, were held on the Lamar and Felicia Dewberry property in 2007 and on the John Osborne property in 2008. Both of these tour sites are award-winning farms. Other tour stops included presentations on local history, a Southeastern Raptor Center exhibit, and the danger of meth labs in forests.

Forests provide habitat for abundant wildlife in the area so hunting is a popular sport. Committee members have partnered with the Alabama Department of Conservation in providing hunter education classes to teach hunter safety and responsibility. Forests also provide a place for recreational activities such as hiking, camping, birding, and a growing interest - wildflowers. The diversity of Mt. Cheaha State Park lends itself to a variety of blooming plants from early spring well into fall. A desire to share photographs of flowers like the mountain laurel and wild azalea seen around the park became the inspiration for hosting a wildflower tour and printing a wildflower reference book. The wildflower tour took some 45 attendees on a scenic hike around the Lake Chinnabee shoreline and camping area to identify native flora and instill an appreciation for these plants.

### Youth Programs

The 4-H Club Forestry program helps young people understand their link to the natural environment and the need to conserve and manage these resources. Youth learn a number of skills including how to identify trees, evaluate forest stands, measure standing timber, and identify insects and diseases of trees. Committee members have served as dedicated teachers and coaches for Clay County 4-H Forestry Judging teams devoting many hours of work over the

years. Because of their commitment, Clay County 4-H teams have won three national championships and currently hold the national title. But more importantly, dozens of youth have acquired knowledge and life skills about forestry and natural resources.

The Forest in the Classroom/Classroom in the Forest program for 5th graders has a primary objective to expose students to wise management of forest resources. Conducted by the Committee, it has taught about 300 students the importance of forest and natural resources, private landownership, and everyone's responsibility to be good stewards. The first session is set in the classroom where students learn the importance of forest natural resources in everyday life. Session two is set in a local certified TREASURE forest. Here students participate in games and activities such as "Oh Deer!", a game that teaches how habitat affects wildlife populations.

### Logger Education

The Committee also offers annual training to loggers seeking continuing education units to fulfill the professional logging manager requirement of six hours per

year. Trainings have included topics such as logging safety and environmental concerns.

### Conclusion

We are the caretakers of the forests today. Through these and future projects, it is our hope that today's citizens will join in the conservation and management of our natural resources so that these resources can be enjoyed by generations of tomorrow. 🌲

### Author's Picks for Further Reading

Alabama Cooperative Extension System

 [www.aces.edu](http://www.aces.edu)

Alabama Treasure Forest Association

 [www.atfa.net](http://www.atfa.net)

Alabama Forestry Commission

 [www.forestry.alabama.gov](http://www.forestry.alabama.gov)

### About the Author

Marsha S. Moorehead is the County Extension Coordinator in Clay County with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

“The 4-H Club Forestry program helps young people understand their link to the natural environment and the need to conserve and manage these resources.”



# Youth Civic Engagement through the Youth City Council Program

By Stanley M. Guy



A crowd in City Hall witnesses the swearing in of a new Mayor and City Council. The city recorder asks those taking office to repeat the oath:

"I do solemnly swear that I will support, obey, and defend the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of this State; that I will discharge the duties of my office with fidelity."

These new "city officials" bring dedication, enthusiasm, and youthful energy to City Hall. They are members of a Youth City Council (YCC) and affirm youth civic engagement is alive and well throughout the United States. Though YCCs exist across the U.S., with the help of Cooperative Extension these councils could be duplicated in each state in the country.

## Youth City Councils – An Established Concept

The first YCC in Utah was established in the early 1970s as a cooperative project between officials in Hyrum City and Utah State University (USU) Extension. It was part of a Utah Community Progress initiative used to stimulate community self-improvement. Nearly half of the 246 cities and towns in Utah have active Youth City Councils.

The councils mirror local city government.

As such, they are non-partisan. They have a youth mayor, youth council members, and a youth city recorder. If they're large enough, they have youth city department heads and committee chairs, and the youth councils can adapt to small and

large numbers of youth participants. YCCs create and adopt charters that detail their purposes. They provide city officials with a teenage point of view. The teens gain perspectives on local government and the political process. Madison, a YCC member noted that, "One of the most fascinating things about being a member of the Draper, Utah, Youth Council is our involvement in government. We have had opportunities to see government close up and personal on the local, state, and federal levels."

## Youth City Council Endeavors

The success of the Youth City Council program lies with local ownership. The Mayor and City Council approve the creation of a YCC in their respective city and elected officials consider youth involved in YCCs as ambassadors for their city. YCC participants are usually 14 to 18 years of age and reside within city boundaries. They have their own council meetings, work meetings, service projects, and celebrations. They decide what projects to do to meet local needs. YCCs team up with a multitude of local service-oriented organizations to carry out projects in their communities. This includes service projects with police departments, parks and recreation, and other community groups.

Many Youth City Councils are involved with their local schools and help with reading and tutoring programs. One YCC chapter sponsors a freedom essay contest for students in their school. Others are involved in local school carnivals, after school programs, and mentoring at-risk students.

Communities throughout America have Founder's Day Activities, Fourth of July parades, and other celebrations that promote civic pride, and Youth City Councils participate in many of these celebrations. Councils also hold meet-the-candidate nights, police and firefighter appreciation dinners, and Senior Citizen Balls. YCCs plan and carry out food and clothing drives for local charities. The endeavors of YCCs are varied, based upon the decisions of the YCC.

## Role of Extension in Youth City Councils

Extension resources are important in creating a focal point for Youth City Councils and helping keep YCCs connected with each other. Utah State University Extension provides training and marketing for the Councils. Marketing of the YCC program is supported through the Youth in Action newsletter and the Association of Youth Councils website. The newsletter highlights activities and events about Youth City Councils. The Association of Youth Councils website (<http://ayc.usu.edu>) contains information for prospective members, current members, youth resources, and awards and recognitions. USU maintains a listserv where YCC advisors sign up to send and receive e-mails.

USU Extension also facilitates the annual Youth Leadership Institute for YCC members. These three-day conferences have inspirational speakers, workshops, peer mentors, and social activities. Evaluations show that approximately ninety percent attending the Leadership Institutes feel they are "excellent" or "good." More importantly, approximately ninety percent of participants say they

are going to adopt best practices taught at the conferences. Eighty-four percent actually used one or more of the best practices taught at prior leadership institutes.

Councils receive USU Awards of Excellence at a banquet during the Leadership Institute. Councils compete in categories based on council size. Both large and small councils receive 1st Place, 2nd Place and 3rd Place awards. Youth City Councils share their positive contributions, involvement with other community groups, difficult or extraordinary circumstances they face, and how they demonstrate competence, growth, and commitment. They describe their positive image among peers, elected officials, and citizens. Letters of recommendation from the Mayor and local elected officials accompany and support the applications. USU Extension gathers information on YCC impacts through this award program.

### Partnerships

Utah State University Extension partners with civic-minded organizations to benefit the Youth City Council program. The Utah League of Cities and Towns sponsors Local Officials' Day with the Legislature. This event provides unique opportunities for YCCs to meet with their legislators and discuss important issues. During the event, the Councils interact with their representatives while they attend Committee Meetings, observe the State Legislature in action, and enjoy a luncheon with their legislators.

### Youth City Councils – Lessons Learned

What does it take to start a Youth City Council in your city? The best approach is to find someone in the community to present the concept to the Mayor and City Council. This may be an elected official, parent, municipal employee, or in some cases, a youth who wants to be involved in YCC. Once one city implements the YCC model, other cities in the area begin to adopt it. Typically, the Mayor and City Council will be supportive of a Youth

City Council. To gain and maintain their support, it is imperative for YCCs to keep the Mayor and City Councils well informed about their progress, service, and activities. And it is recommended that the Youth City Council submit monthly reports to the City Council.

It is essential that volunteer YCC Advisors work alongside the teens. Successful YCCs use sound principles of youth/adult partnerships. This requires respecting and valuing the unique contributions from each group.

It is important Youth City Councils have the opportunity to meet with other Councils to share best practices, discuss their involvement in community service projects, and to provide opportunities for the advisors to interact with one another. Consider partnering with your university's conference services to hold a Leadership Institute as the number of youth city councils within your state grows. Councils learn and gather strength from interacting with each other.

### Now It's Your Turn!

The Youth City Council model is an effective way for youth councils to organize, to help youth understand municipal government, to become more civic minded, and to develop and apply leadership skills. The program has stood the test of time, and now it's time for you to think about starting Youth City Councils in your state! They are a great way for Extension to promote youth civic engagement in partnership with local cities and towns. 🏡

### Author's Picks for Further Reading

Association of Youth Councils

 <http://ayc.usu.edu/>

For information on youth civic engagement: The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE)

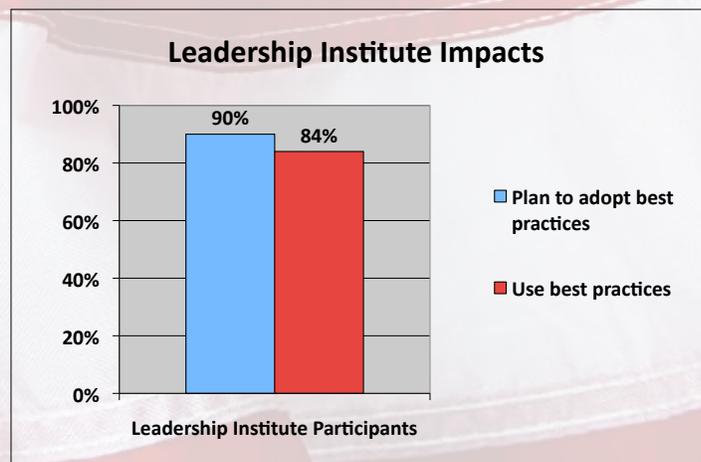
 <http://www.civicyouth.org/>

For information on adult/youth partnerships: The Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development:

 <http://www.theinnovationcenter.org/>

### About the Author

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# Listening to the Experts: A Report on what we heard

By Diane C. Vigna, Patricia J. Fairchild and Nancy Eberle

## Introduction

Nebraska 4-H is developing a comprehensive, experiential set of entrepreneurship curricula with the following overarching goals: to encourage youth to think like entrepreneurs at a very young age; to help youth identify business success in their own communities and encourage it to remain local as future entrepreneurs; and to inspire adults in said communities to embrace and support their youth as future entrepreneurs who can contribute to the community's future economic vitality.

Thus far, the first goal of this set has been met. The EntrepreneurShip Investigation (ESI) curriculum was written at a middle school reading level and is offered to youth in middle schools, high schools, 4-H clubs, entrepreneurship-focused camps, and communities. This curriculum has met with resounding acceptance since its May 2008 publication, and youth have started several businesses across the state.

The second goal will culminate in a community resource guide, which will be directed toward adults in communities. Its purpose is to assist local community leaders to better help youth in their communities become entrepreneurs. The guide, entitled *Community Connections*, will help individuals in the community encourage and mentor youth who are learning about entrepreneurship.

*Community Connections* will act as a bridge to connect youth and their entrepreneurial activities to community development efforts. The guide will facilitate interaction between communities, businesses and youth entrepreneurs in a dynamic, innovative way to create new enterprises for rural areas.

In order to give communities the tools they need, we consulted with a number of "experts" across the state in focused listening sessions to gain insight into what

this new product should encompass and what it should provide communities and youth.

A purposive sampling method was used to select participants for the eight listening sessions, which included:

1. A group who teach adults about entrepreneurship
2. An economic development group
3. A financial group
4. A leadership education for adults and communities group
5. A group that teaches youth about entrepreneurship
6. A group that helped us look at the "Big Picture"
7. Community leaders group
8. Young entrepreneurs group

Participants at each session responded to the following questions:

1. What should a guide to help communities work with and encourage young entrepreneurs encompass?
2. What should such a guide provide communities?
3. What should it look like?
4. What should we call it?
5. Do you or your agency have anything you could offer to this guide?

All notes were compiled and themes were highlighted. Each listener independently determined frequently-heard themes from each of the eight sessions. After results were tabulated, individual listeners reanalyzed them, and tabulations were compiled to determine dominant themes heard within each session. Finally, dominant themes heard across groups were identified.

The following lists of themes resulted:

### Adult Education for Entrepreneurs

1. Accessibility
2. Community Assessment/Survey
3. Models, Case Studies, Templates

4. Socio-psychology – Attitude Change
5. Mentoring
6. Intergenerational – Family Involvement
7. Outside Resources/Partners

### Economic Development

1. Models/Case Studies
2. Community Assessment/Survey
3. Mentoring
4. Marketing
5. Diverse Delivery Modes
6. Use of outside resources
7. Definition of Terms/Attitude Change

### Financial

1. Mentors, Mavens, Coaches
2. Models/Case Studies/Templates
3. Resources
4. Diverse Delivery Modes
5. Community Cooperation and Sharing
6. Business Transition

### Leadership

1. Models/Case Studies
2. Resources
3. Change of Attitude about Community Future
4. Mentoring/Relationship
5. Youth/Adult Interaction

### Youth Entrepreneurship Education

1. Attitude/Respect for Youth
2. Diverse Delivery Modes/Technology
3. Models, Templates, Case Studies
4. Use of Outside Resources
5. Mentors
6. Succession Planning

### Big Picture

1. Mentors
2. Leaders/Mavens
3. Business Transitioning
4. Models, Case Studies
5. Engage Youth
6. Economic Resources

### Community Leaders

1. Encourage Youth/Supportive Environment

2. Intergenerational Education
3. Mentoring
4. Models/Best Practice/ Case Studies
5. Outside Resources
6. Community Assessment

## Young Entrepreneurs

1. Encourage Youth /Supportive Environment
2. Educational Tools for Youth
3. Educate the Community
4. Mentors
5. Family Support

## Common Themes Across All 8 Sessions

1. Mentors/Mavens/Coaches
2. Outside Resources/Partners
3. Models/Case Studies/Templates
4. Socio-psychology/Attitude Change
5. Intergenerational – Family Involvement
6. Diverse Delivery Modes/Technology
7. Community Assessment
8. Marketing

## Conclusions

There is much to do and great potential for Community Connections to help communities and youth work together to build a stronger state in the future. Youth, adults and communities all benefit from mentoring. Thus, one of our main goals has been to find and develop materials to help with multi-faceted mentoring programs. Some of the main lessons we have learned in developing Community Connections and working with our listening session participants include:

- Materials developed to fit community and youth entrepreneur needs can and should come from outside resources whenever possible. This will help to develop meaningful partnerships with Community Connections and communities and their youth as well.
- Resources must be readily accessible, easy to use and turnkey. Materials need to be offered in a variety of media for differing settings and learning styles. Electronic media and technology needs to be a focus.

Community Connections will be offered entirely online and will be free of charge.

- Encouraging environments must be created to support young entrepreneurs. Communities need to be encouraged to take stock of what they have - in natural, social and business resources - and build a vision for their futures.
- Some communities are ready for this program and some are not. Begin with those communities that are ready. These communities will become successful models to encourage others.
- Education works, both for young entrepreneurs and for communities. Community Connections will help community leaders learn strategies to help youth experience enhanced economic and community awareness and develop skills that lead to enterprise development and commitment to the future of the community.
- Community members need help to appreciate the value of entrepreneurship and its relationship to economic development within the community. Establish an entrepreneur culture for the community.
- Intergenerational programming is important to engage youth with the community and to change attitudes toward youth in the community.
- Communities want to understand how to work with youth, while encouraging them to become entrepreneurs. Through Community Connections, rural communities will help youth learn to become entrepreneurs without the restrictions of what courses, clubs and civic organizations are available within their community
- Community Connections will assist local community leaders to better encourage youth in their communities to become entrepreneurs. It will be targeted for community leaders such as Chambers of Commerce

members, city and county officials, local leaders and community groups. The guide will help individuals mentor youth and provide tips as to how communities can coordinate and facilitate resources to provide a more meaningful, holistic, coordinated community effort.

This project will enhance economic opportunity and community and neighborhood revitalization efforts, create more opportunities for future generations, and improve quality of life. It will enable communities to retain their talented and educated youth. Involvement with their community will encourage youth to build their lives in rural places. 🏡

## Authors' Picks for Further Reading

EntrepreneurShip Investigation (ESI)

 <http://www.4h.unl.edu/esi>

Markely, D., Macke, D. & Luther V. (2005). Energizing entrepreneurs: Charting a course for rural communities. Lincoln, NE: RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship and Heartland Center for Leadership Development. Website: <http://www.energizingentrepreneurs.org>

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