WESTERN RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

2018 Annual Report

Helping rural communities to prosper, thrive economically, and become self-sustaining
The Western Rural Development Center (WRDC) is one of four regional centers funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to strengthen the capacity of local citizens to guide the future of their rural communities. Each Center links the research and Extension capacity of regional land-grant universities with local decision-makers to address a wide range of rural development issues. The Western Rural Development Center is hosted by Utah State University and receives support from Utah State University Extension and the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station. 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 or other funders. The Western Rural Development Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, or veteran status.

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MISSION & GOALS

MISSION
The Western Rural Development Center collaborates with western land-grant universities and public and private sector partners to promote excellence in research, education, and Cooperative Extension for the prosperity of western rural communities.

GOALS
The Western Rural Development Center works to build capacity throughout the region’s Land-Grant Universities and Cooperative Extension Service to help rural communities prosper, thrive economically, and become self-sustaining.

STRATEGIES
The Western Rural Development Center collaborates with the Western Extension Directors Association, the Western Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors, Western Land-Grant Universities, and public and private sector partners to analyze, develop, and share scientific discovery and application of sustainable rural community development practices.

In order to more effectively address these issues and the emerging concerns facing the residents of the rural West, the Western Rural Development Center focuses its efforts on three priority areas: 1) People-Based Development; 2) Place-Based Development; and 3) Sustainable Natural Resource Development.

REGIONAL FOCUS NATIONAL IMPACT
This report highlights some of our activities and accomplishments from 2018. View past accomplishments in our previous years’ reports on the website.
WRDC.USU.EDU/ANNUAL-REPORTS
Manufacturing employment in the United States reached a peak at more than 19 million jobs in 1979. Since then, the number of manufacturing jobs has steadily declined. Today, there are over seven million fewer manufacturing jobs than in the 1970s. Similarly, employment in agriculture, logging, mining and other goods-producing industries has declined. Agricultural labor needs have been reduced by 90%, another 90% of coal mining jobs have been lost, and two-thirds of logging jobs have gone away since 1990. By far the most significant factor in these declines is technological developments where machines replace human labor in the production process. With modern technology, production in all of these sectors has increased sharply despite a much smaller workforce.

There is no question that the trend of replacing human labor with machines will continue. Further, this trend will spread to other economic sectors. For example, we can expect to lose millions of jobs in the retail sector in the next few years because of online shopping and other technologies. Going forward, any job that involves repetition is likely to be replaced by a machine.

The loss of these jobs often means extreme hardship for the individuals involved and the communities in which they live. Many people are finding the skills that once allowed them to earn a living are no longer relevant. Disruptions have been especially pronounced in rural communities since rural communities have traditionally been much more dependent on jobs in the goods-producing industries than their urban counterparts. Lost jobs have resulted in a variety of other concerns such as poor health, higher mortality rates and increased levels of drug use.

These trends raise serious concerns about how rural communities are going to economically survive in the future. Fortunately, while 21st century technology has closed some doors for rural Americans, it has opened others. Specifically, modern information and communication technology has reduced the relevance of distance. As
a consequence, it is now possible for people to live where they wish and still market their products and skills anywhere in the world. Obviously, a critical prerequisite for this to happen is adequate Internet, which is often lacking in rural areas. Additionally, the education and skills needed in a 21st century economy are different from those needed in the past.

The Western Rural Development Center (WRDC) is committed to helping the residents of rural America address these economic concerns. We strive to help people find 21st century solutions that work and help people understand that 20th century solutions do not always work in the 21st century.

The WRDC has a number of tools to help us achieve our objectives. Our publications seek to share knowledge, skills and effective programs. Rural Connections, edited and designed by Betsy Newman, is widely recognized as an effective means of sharing this information. Our policy briefs provide scientifically-sound and politically-neutral information on a range of topics that impact Rural America. In 2019, two of my books will be published. I coedited a book with Paul Lachapelle of Montana State University titled, “Addressing Climate Change at the Community Level in the United States,” that shares programs and policies to help communities adjust to a changing climate. In “Building a Resilient 21st Century Economy for Rural America,” I explore what has happened to communities that have been traditionally dependent on one of several goods-producing industries (manufacturing, agriculture, logging, coal mining, etc.). I then provide suggestions to help them develop a thriving and sustainable economy in the years to come.

In addition, WRDC programs seek to help communities address their economic concerns. For example, our ASAP (Area Sector Analysis Process) program helps communities consider their assets and goals in targeting industrial sectors that are both desirable to community residents and compatible with industry needs. ASAP has been implemented in more than two-dozen counties throughout the West.

As always, I appreciate our many partners who assist us in our work. I especially appreciate the insights of the WRDC Board of Directors. I also wish to sincerely express my appreciation to the WRDC staff: Betsy Newman, Deanna Thompson and Riana Gayle. It is a pleasure for me to work with each of them.
The Western Rural Development Center launched its Federal Lands Management Research and Extension Initiative in collaboration with the Western Extension Directors Association and Western Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors.

**THE FEDERAL LANDS MANAGEMENT (FLM) TEAM WILL PROVIDE:**

1. Scientifically-sound and politically-neutral information on the consequences of various land management decisions;
2. An understanding of the views of various population segments on these issues;
3. The capacity to present this information to policy makers and other interested individuals in an unbiased manner.

**POTENTIAL QUESTIONS TO BE EXPLORED INCLUDE:**

- What are the social, demographic, and economic implications of varying levels of federal land in different regions of the West?
- What are the local impacts of changes in land management objectives? For example, what are the economic impacts for local communities in areas designated as national monuments and parks?
- To what extent do residents of the West support different land management plans? Which land management plans do western residents support?

The FLM team held its inaugural meeting at the WRDC offices on the Utah State University campus in Logan, Utah, in September 2018. The team is constructing a unique GIS data set that will allow detailed analysis on many socioeconomic questions surrounding federal lands. The data set will provide extensive data at the square kilometer level for the continental United States west of the 98th parallel. The team also plans to organize a federal lands WERA project.

**FEDERAL LANDS MANAGEMENT TEAM**

Don Albrecht, Western Rural Development Center; Yong Chen, Oregon State University; Riana Gayle, Western Rural Development Center; Paul Jakus, Utah State University; Paul Lachapelle, Montana State University; Sam Smallidge, New Mexico State University; and Julie Suhr-Pierce, Utah Bureau of Land Management
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

The Western Rural Development Center identified needs in its region for increased training and professional development opportunities for Cooperative Extension. The WRDC, in collaboration with its land-grant university partners throughout the West, provided training opportunities and professional development opportunities to regional Extension professionals to further assist with building Extension’s capacity in the West as it relates to rural community development.

In 2018, the Center provided training support to two western Extension teams, one from University of Idaho and one from Washington State University, to attend the national train-the-trainer workshop, “Coming Together for Racial Understanding,” held in August 2018. (For details about this workshop, visit http://srdc.msstate.edu/civildialogue/index.html.) These teams are now preparing to deliver the training to their Extension colleagues in their respective states and the WRDC will be providing assistance for these state-level trainings in 2019.

RECIPIENTS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT

**Washington State University**
Bernardta Veronica Sallato Camona
José Luis Garcia Pabon
Marcia Ostrom
Michael Wallace

**University of Idaho**
Jackie Amende
Charity Buchert
Surine Greenway
The Western Rural Development Center’s Area Sector Analysis Process (ASAP) team is continuing to serve communities throughout the western U.S. The Area Sector Analysis Process was designed by Extension Specialists and Agents for Extension to use in collaboration with community leaders in targeted, sustainable economic development and has already been successfully applied to multiple communities across the region in Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, and Utah.

ASAP ASSISTS COMMUNITIES BY IDENTIFYING:
1. Community goals and priorities for economic development
2. Community assets that will help achieve the community’s goals and priorities
3. Industry needs and factors important for locating their operations in a community
4. Businesses that are consistent with the community’s goals and priorities

ASAP COMMUNITIES
ASAP has been successfully applied to multiple communities across the region in Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah. In 2018, ASAP was implemented in eight western communities in Alaska, Arizona, and Utah.
THE ASAP TEAM
Don Albrecht
Western Rural Development Center

Mark Apel
University of Arizona Extension

Marion Bentley
Utah State University Extension

Ashley Bickel
University of Arizona Extension

Buddy Borden
University of Nevada Cooperative Extension

Malieka Bordigioni
University of Nevada-Reno

Dari Duval
University of Arizona Extension

Thomas Harris
University of Nevada-Reno

Paul Jakus
Utah State University

Paul Lewin
University of Idaho Extension

Phil Watson
University of Idaho

LAUNCHING IN 2019
In 2019, we are launching ASAP in several new communities in Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, and Utah.

Want to learn more about ASAP and how it can benefit your Extension program or community? Contact us at wrdc@usu.edu.

LEARN MORE ABOUT ASAP!
Visit our website for more information about the Area Sector Analysis Process.
WRDC.USU.EDU/PROGRAMS/ASAP

ASAP At-a-Glance
Serving communities for 12 years and counting!

9 western states have ASAP communities

40 western communities have participated in ASAP

750 citizens have served on ASAP committees
RURAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
RESEARCH AND EXTENSION INITIATIVE

The Western Rural Development Center, in collaboration with the Western Extension Directors Association and Western Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors, has assembled a team of western researchers and Extension faculty to address rural workforce development issues in the Western U.S.

The Rural Workforce Development Research and Extension Initiative (RWDI) brings together a team of those in the western region already working on these issues to analyze data of existing programs and unmet needs, identify what may be needed to better address these needs, and then develop a plan to conduct additional research and/or develop replicable outreach programs.

The RWDI team met face-to-face in October 2018 for their annual meeting to further their efforts on researching the freelance economy and its potential for increasing economic opportunities in rural areas with broadband access. A critical question the team is exploring is the extent to which the freelancing is a feasible and sustainable economic development strategy for rural communities. To begin to assess this question, the team will analyze secondary data sources and conduct random-sample surveys in two rural counties in the West.
THE FREELANCE ECONOMY
The freelance economy, the first area the RWD team is focusing on, has gained favor among creatives and others whose jobs allow them to work remotely.

Freelancers and remote-working employees enjoy the many benefits of living in rural areas, such as natural amenities for enjoyment and recreation along with a lower cost of living. The biggest challenge rural communities encounter when trying to attract freelancers and remote-working employees is the lack of broadband internet.

A freelance economy relies on workers being able to quickly and consistently connect to the internet in order to collaborate with clients and coworkers, download and upload work projects, operate an online business or marketplace, conduct financial transactions, and manage various social media channels such as YouTube, Patreon, Instagram, and others that may be important components of a successful business.

RURAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TEAM
Don Albrecht, Western Rural Development Center; Thomas Harris, University of Nevada-Reno; Paul Hill, Utah State University Extension; Michael Patrick, New Mexico State University; Loretta Singletary, University of Nevada-Reno; M. Anne Visser, University of California-Davis
In 2016, the Western Rural Development Center led a national collaboration with the USDA-NIFA Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program to develop and deliver online training modules about the SBIR grant proposal and submission process to increase awareness and understanding of the USDA’s SBIR Grant Program. The training, SBIR Outreach Training and Technical Assistance (SBIR OTTA), specifically targeted Cooperative Extension specialists and agents to prepare them to better assist potential SBIR grant applicants with navigating the proposal writing and submission process.

FUNDING RENEWED

The efforts we made in 2016 were well-received and sparked interest in targeting training efforts in those states with a lower number of SBIR proposal submissions and awards. In 2017, we were awarded a renewal by USDA-NIFA-SBIR to deliver face-to-face trainings to eight, underserved states during the summer of 2018.

OUTCOMES OF THE FACE-TO-FACE TRAININGS

181 would-be SBIR grant submitters attended the trainings. Of them, 63% had never previously applied for any kind of grant and 95% had never previously applied for a SBIR grant. Prior to the trainings, only seven participants reported they planned to submit a SBIR grant proposal; whereas, following the trainings, 29 participants reported they planned to submit a SBIR proposal.
SBIR TRAINING OBJECTIVES

1. Assemble a team of Extension professionals from the eight, underserved states identified by the USDA-NIFA-SBIR staff as having produced a lower number of proposals and awards

2. Collaborate with Dawnbreaker* to customize SBIR proposal training materials for an Extension audience

3. Promote and deliver the SBIR face-to-face trainings in the eight underserved states specifically targeting qualified women-owned and minority-owned businesses

4. Promote the availability of these new SBIR training materials to Extension

5. Develop evaluation tools to determine the effectiveness of the face-to-face trainings

6. Analyze the data and evaluate it for any needed improvements prior to the 2019 funding cycle

*Dawnbreaker is a company contracted by Federal agencies to “advance national technology innovation initiatives of Federal agencies and small, advanced technology firms.”

2018 SBIR TRAINING STATES

Illinois
Ohio
West Virginia
Pennsylvania
Alabama
Georgia
Nevada
Utah

SBIR TEAM

Don Albrecht
WRDC
Scott Dockum
USDA NIFA
Brent Elrod
USDA NIFA
Betsy Newman
WRDC
Mark Skidmore
NCRCRD
Susan Odum
University of Illinois
Ronald Duncan
University of Illinois
Kyle White
Ohio State University
Stephan Goetz
NCRCD
Daniel Eades
West Virginia University
Winifred McGee
Penn State University
Steven Turner
SRDC
Jazmine Brantley
Auburn University
Andrea Scarrow
University of Georgia
Joy Moton-Thomas
Fort Valley State University
Buddy Borden
University of Nevada-Reno
Paul Hill
Utah State University
BOOKS
“Addressing Climate Change at the Community Level in the U.S.”
Edited by Paul Lachapelle and Don Albrecht. This book consists of 18 chapters written by experts from throughout the country on successful programs regarding local adaptation to climate change.

About the Book
The concept of community, in all its diverse definitions and manifestations, provides a unique approach to learn more about how groups of individuals and organizations are addressing the challenges posed by climate change. This new volume highlights specific cases of communities developing innovative approaches to climate mitigation and adaptation around the United States. Defining community more comprehensively than just spatial geography to include also communities of interest, identity and practice, this book highlights how individuals and organizations are addressing the challenges posed by climate change through more resilient social processes, government policies and sustainable practices.

Forthcoming Book
“Building a 21st Century Economy for Rural America”
In this book, Dr. Albrecht explores a number of communities that have traditionally been dependent on a variety of economic sectors such as agriculture, logging, manufacturing, coal mining, and oil and gas development. In each of these sectors, employment levels have declined as technological developments replace human labor in the production process. No question, declining employment in these sectors will continue. This book then describes opportunities for economic development available to these communities.

WESTERN POLICY BRIEFS
The Western Policy Briefs are published periodically on topics related to issues affecting rural communities.

2018 BRIEFS
Using Homes to Improve Behavioral Health Outcomes in the Rural West
By Brandn Green
wrdc.usu.edu/files-ou/4_Using-Homes-Improve-Behavioral-Health-Rural-West.pdf

Addressing Rural Housing Challenges: What USDA Can Do
By Corianne Payton Scally
wrdc.usu.edu/files-ou/5_Addressing-Rural-Housing.pdf
MAGAZINE

*Rural Connections*, the magazine of the Western Rural Development Center, is published to inform the nation on timely research and activities by the West’s land-grant institutions and regional/national agencies as it relates to rural development issues in the region.

Contributors to *Rural Connections* include researchers, faculty, Extension researchers, specialists, and agents, practitioners, and professionals from throughout the West with occasional contributions from outside the region.

**SPRING/SUMMER 2018 ISSUE**

- Already and Lifestyle: How a Rural Nevada Town Used its Natural Assets to Become Sustainable and Successful
- Climate Adaptation Planning in Northwest Alaska
- Enhancing America’s ‘Rural Lifestyle’
- The Role of Manufactured Homes in Meeting Rural Housing Needs
- Communities that Eat Together Grow Together
- Farm Fresh Food Box

**FALL 2018 ISSUE**

- Building Relationships, Construyendo Relaciones: Latino Energy Outreach and Research in the Pacific Northwest
- Putting a Price on Ecosystem Services
- Bringing Jobs and Dollars to John Day Country through Watershed Restoration
- Farmers Market Flash
- Bringing Cooperatives Back In
- Jumping into Opportunities to Cooperate
- WY-Homing

View and download past issues!
wrdc.usu.edu/htm/rural-connections
The Western Rural Development Center receives its core funding from the USDA’s National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and leveraged these funds in 2018 to secure additional funding from the institutions and agencies listed below.

**2018-19 LEVERAGED FUNDS:**

- Utah State University Extension
- Utah Agricultural Experiment Station
- USDA NIFA AFRI - Area Sector Analysis Process
- USDA NIFA SBIR - Outreach Training and Technical Assistance
- USDA NIFA Core Funding

**THE OVERARCHING GOAL OF THE WESTERN RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER IS TO HELP RURAL COMMUNITIES PROSPER, THRIVE ECONOMICALLY, AND BECOME SELF-SUSTAINING.**
The Western Rural Development Center staff works to increase the prosperity of western rural communities **by collaboratively working with the land-grant colleges and universities throughout the region** to build Cooperative Extension’s community development capacity through promoting and supporting excellence in research, education, and Extension outreach activities.

**1862 INSTITUTIONS**
- American Samoa Community College
- Colorado State University
- Montana State University
- New Mexico State University
- Northern Marianas College
- Oregon State University
- University of Alaska
- University of Arizona
- University of California
- University of Guam
- University of Hawaii
- University of Idaho
- University of Nevada
- University of Wyoming
- Utah State University
- Washington State University

**1994 INSTITUTIONS**
- Blackfoot Community College
- Chief Dull Knife College
- Dine College
- Fort Belknap College
- Fort Peck Community College
- Institute of American Indian Arts
- Little Big Horn College
- Navajo Technical College
- Northwest Indian College
- Salish Kootenai College
- Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute
- Stone Child College
- Tohono O’Odham Community College
MISSION
The Western Rural Development Center collaborates with western land-grant universities and public and private sector partners to promote excellence in research, education, and Extension for the prosperity of western rural communities.

SNAPSHOT OF THE REGION
13 WESTERN STATES AND 4 U.S. PACIFIC TERRITORIES*

- 29 Western Land-Grant Institutions
- 1,873,253 Square Miles
- 75,821,560 2017 Population (estimate)

*Data not available for the four U.S. Pacific Territories

BREAKDOWN OF THE WEST’S POPULATION

- 50% MALE
  - 37,793,538
- 50% FEMALE
  - 38,028,022
- 24% UNDER 18YRS
  - 17,840,207

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey and Decennial Census, USDA Economic Research Service.
The Western Rural Development Center is one of four USDA-funded Regional Rural Development Centers. The Centers work within their respective regions and collectively on national projects.

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TRUSTED SOURCE
CONNECTING THE NATIONWIDE NETWORK OF LAND-GRANT COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

The Regional Rural Development Centers are a trusted source of economic and community development data, decision tools, education, and guidance in our nation’s rural communities.

Together the Centers form a one-stop shop to connect to the nationwide network of land-grant college and university researchers, educators, and practitioners to provide sound information and hands-on, community-level training. The trainings help rural communities make science-based decisions about their community and economic development investments.