Western Rural Development Center
Annual Report 2006-07

Hosted by Utah State University
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Delivering resources and programming to rural communities and land-grant universities throughout the Western U.S.
Letter to Stakeholders

Dear Supporters:

As you will notice in this year’s annual report the WRDC continues to engage western rural citizens, university faculty, policy makers and state and federal agencies as they create a new future for the West. The challenges of rural citizens in the West continue to grow as well as opportunities to create a positive future for the citizens who live in this vast region. As a convener, catalyst and conduit the WRDC uses its limited resources to respond to specific areas where our networks can make a difference.

This year we focused on four key areas. The first is enterprise development. Our work in the area of rural enterprise developed from a basic philosophy that rural entrepreneurs are not lone individuals but are imbedded in a context of community. Therefore with our Western Enhancing, Developing and Growing Entrepreneurs (EDGE) program we help local communities develop a support system for existing and new entrepreneurs. Additionally, we provided training to community leaders, state agency personnel and Cooperative Extension faculty in how to organize, implement and follow-up on local entrepreneurial activities.

While the WRDC does not work directly with communities recruiting industry we are very aware that this is an important activity for many rural places. To better help rural citizens match their quality of life and economic goals with relocating companies we have developed a Community-Business Matching model. This model is directed by faculty at the University of Nevada-Reno, University of Hawaii, and Montana State University. The CBM model helps rural communities identify their assets and goals and match those with businesses that may want to relocate to their community or region.

In addition to these more traditional community development activities the WRDC has also developed an annotated bibliography focused on sustainable rural community development. This online bibliography leads readers through a comprehensive list of resources to help them think through how to sustainably develop their community to maintain economy, environmental integrity and overall quality of life. Linking to sustainable development the WRDC has taken the lead on studying the role of green entrepreneurship in local development. This research supported a graduate student and the first publication from this project titled “Green Entrepreneurship: A Method for Managing Natural Resources” has been accepted for publication in an international journal.

Agriculture is still an important cultural and economic activity in many western communities. Farms and ranches continue to grow in size and yet fewer young people are able to enter agriculture for the long term. To provide educators and local farmers and ranchers with cutting-edge scientific information on alternative markets the WRDC delivered a training titled, “Entrepreneurial Sustainable Agriculture: Alternatives for Processing, Packaging, Labeling and Marketing in Retail/Internet Environments” to participants from California, Idaho, Oregon, Utah and New York. This project was funded by the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program. Through this partnership a DVD will be released later this fall including the video/audio presentations, web-based resources, state-by-state contacts and additional educational materials. We have also continued our work with the Southwest Marketing Network providing support to identify new markets for small family-owned farms and ranches.

Thank you for your continued support and encouragement.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Rapid energy development is impacting many western communities and the WRDC has initiated a study team to better understand how communities respond to rapid energy development. The goal of this research is to develop tools of value for rural leaders as they mitigate some of the negative consequences of rapid growth due to energy development. The research has been presented to international audiences in Park City, Utah and as far away as Oxford University, United Kingdom.

As we work to support rural citizens in their quest for a positive future we are also cognizant of the very real issue of poverty in Western rural areas. In 2005 the WRDC in partnership with the RUPRI Poverty Center at Oregon State University convened a group of researchers, practitioners and policy makers to discuss poverty alleviation in rural places. Those papers as well as others were compiled into a special edition of the journal *Community Development: Journal of the Community Development Society* co-edited by me and Bruce A. Weber, Oregon State University. The goal of this work is to develop clear methods and policies for reducing poverty in rural communities in the West.

While the WRDC is not a policy organization per se we do see our role as one where we help convene rural citizens to have an impact on their policy makers. The goal here is to make sure the rural voice does not get lost in our primarily urban culture and policy environment. Partnering with the Rural Community Assistance Corporation and the Center for Rural Affairs the WRDC is helping to organize and facilitate the Western Rural Policy Advocates project. This project will bring together rural citizens across the western states to identify specific state policies that will enhance their lives.

Not all of our work has been on education and research. We have worked diligently to develop outreach materials that respond to emerging issues in the West. Our *Rural Connections* newsletter has been a success since its first introduction. Produced both in hard copy and electronic form citizens have instant access to ideas ranging from how to work with public lands to how to incorporate arts into local development efforts.

The WRDC welcomed our first Senior Fellow, Mr. Michael J. Torrens. Mr. Torrens is the director of applied research at the Corporation for Enterprise Development. He brings a new and powerful network to the WRDC family and we are very excited about his willingness to work with and provide us with insight into rural development. We also support numerous graduate students who not only help us keep the WRDC machine running but who also learn about rural development and the issues facing rural people and places. We believe many of these graduate students will carry with them the ideals of a viable rural culture.

I hope this sampling of WRDC activities illustrates how we are responding to the grassroots issues of western rural citizens. Our goal is to play a role in supporting rural people as they create a future for themselves and their children. We are constantly looking for new partners and if you see a link between our mission and yours please contact us so we can work together for a positive future in our western rural communities.

Thank you for your continued support and encouragement.

Sincerely,

John C. Allen, Director
The Western Rural Development Center (WRDC) is one of four regional centers funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Services (CSREES) 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 WRDC also receives substantial support from Utah State University from Cooperative Extension; the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences; the Agricultural Experiment Station and the College of Natural Resources.

The WRDC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability or veteran status.

The four USDA-funded Regional Rural Development Centers include the Western Rural Development Center and the:

North Central Regional Center for Rural Development
Iowa State University
Cornelia Butler Flora, Director

Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development
The Pennsylvania State University
Stephan J. Goetz, Director

Southern Rural Development Center
Mississippi State University
Lionel J. Beaulieu, Director

The WRDC meaningfully contributes to the quality of life in the rural West as a catalyst, a convener, and a conduit.

Catalyst
As a catalyst, the WRDC initiates projects by bringing resources and people together to jump-start innovative concepts.

Convener
As a convener, the WRDC brings eclectic groups of people together to learn about issues and one another’s values and goals, and think creatively about how to shape the kind of West that we can all call home.

Conduit
As a conduit, the Center enhances the capacity of rural western communities to improve quality of life, sustain local cultures, develop desirable assets, seize emerging opportunities and solve problems.

Specific long-term outcomes include:
Horizontal and vertical dialogue between the land-grant system and outside partners (individuals, groups, organizations, public agencies, private agencies/NGOs), who together offer a broad network of resources that provide best practices, timely information, and resources in accessible packages.

Preparation of knowledgeable, skillful western change agents motivated to work with and within communities using resources, networks, and decision-making tools and processes demonstrated to be effective for community development.

Identification of regional issues; develop, test and diffuse promising practices; gauge results, and develop appropriate tools to enhance community development skills of Extension faculty.

Encourage and support university-based faculty to conduct research that addresses issues critical to rural communities, and to deploy their intellectual assets to build the capacity of rural communities.

Access to high quality, relevant research data and analysis informing decision making and policy development.
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- Access to high quality, relevant research data and analysis informing decision making and policy development.
Through a needs assessment survey and discussions with western Extension faculty, researchers and non-governmental agencies, the WRDC identified four areas of focus for the 2005-2006 Fiscal Year and beyond.

Activities within each focus area will strengthen connections between Extension and research faculty, community and tribal colleges, NGOs, and state and federal agencies that are engaged in rural development activities.

Additionally, these activities will enhance the capacity for community-led rural development. This involves identifying and maximizing human, social, and economic capital.

**Focus Area One**  
**Enterprise Development**  
Support rural communities in their quest for more and better jobs; support business start-ups (including diversified agriculture, forestry, fisheries, tourism and recreation) within a sustainable context.

**Focus Area Two**  
**Capacity of Land-Grant Universities and Partners**  
Strengthen connections between Extension and research faculty, community and tribal colleges, NGOs, and state and federal agencies that are engaged in rural development activities.

**Focus Area Three**  
**Civic Capacity**  
Enhance the capacity for community-led rural development. This involves identifying and maximizing human, social, and economic capital.

**Focus Area Four**  
**Land Use/Public Policy**  
Enhance the quality of natural resources and their management, and inform land use decisions in the rural West.
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The Western Rural Development Center’s work, at this time, contributes to the USDA-CSREES Strategic Goals numbers One, Two and Five.

Goal One
Enhance economic opportunities for agricultural producers.

Goal Two
Support increased economic opportunities and improved quality of life in rural America.

Goal Three
Enhance the protection and safety of the nation’s agriculture and food supply.

Goal Four
Improve the nation’s nutrition and health.

Goal Five
Protect and enhance the nation’s natural resource base and environment.

*The USDA-CSREES Strategic Goals were redefined by CSREES after the WRDC had developed its plan of work for this year. The Center has applied the new goals to its plan of work for FY 2007-08.

CSREES advances knowledge for agriculture, the environment, human health and well-being, and communities throughout national program leadership and federal assistance.
Enterprise development is an economic development strategy that seeks to create a supportive environment in which new ventures can flourish and existing businesses can expand.

Building sustainable rural communities is dependent upon these communities investing in local businesses. A strong local economy is the result of local businesses investing in the local economy and community.

Communities that are able to retain retail and service-sector businesses that are locally owned, reap the benefits as these businesses are more apt to contribute to their communities through investments in the local economy and local causes (Emery et al 2004).


Western EDGE
Enhancing, Developing and Growing Entrepreneurs

Recent research on the relationship between community structure and emerging enterprise development suggests that enterprise development is not simply an individual activity (Korsching and Allen, 2004). Community plays an important role in providing the opportunity for enterprise development, and Extension and its partners have a long history of facilitating changes in community structure.

Through collaboration with NebraskaEDGE and RUPRI’s Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, the WRDC will coordinate the delivery of entrepreneurial training using face-to-face workshops to teach faculty and community leaders how to form active community and regional coalitions focused on enterprise development.

Western EDGE programs include:

- Community-Based Entrepreneurial Training
- E2 Trainer Institute
- E2 Policy Academy
- Business Retention and Expansion Program
- Community-Business Matching Model

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Overview of Western EDGE Programs

Community-Powered Entrepreneurial Training
The Community-Powered Entrepreneurial Training enables communities to offer a comprehensive entrepreneurial training program that includes specific objectives for new and existing businesses, the community, and its Western EDGE coalition.

E2 Trainer Institute
This intensive four-day workshop is designed as a train-the-trainer program for those who wish to deliver the curriculum to other organizations or communities.

E2 Policy Academy
The E2 Policy Academy is organized into three segments to encourage collaboration and interim planning. Participants will work together to shape rural entrepreneurism in your state.

Business Retention and Expansion Program
The BR&E Program helps your community ensure its existing businesses remain sustainable. This program shows you how to grow them and to develop new business from existing business.

Western EDGE: A Beginning

The WRDC offered its Western EDGE Coordinating Committee and Program Management Certification Training to over 45 people in Salt Lake City, Utah, in January 2007.

The participants represented a cross-section of Cooperative Extension, local and state government, community practitioners and business owners. They attended the training from Nevada, Oregon and Utah.

The WRDC is making great strides in promoting its Western EDGE program and several areas throughout the region are working to establish the foundations needed to pursue this economic development program in their communities.

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Overview of Western EDGE Programs Continued

Community-Business Matching Model
An online interactive tool for Extension Specialists

The Community-Business Matching (CBM) Model can provide a framework that communities can use to prioritize their goals and identify the assets they have to help them achieve their industry retention/attraction goals. The CBM model fits these goals and assets to business profiles in order to determine development decisions that reflect the desires of community members.

Any group of people with a common interest in an economic development project or site can use CBM. It provides information for the community to make decisions about which types of industries to retain or attract. Specifically, CBM will provide:

1) A framework for good decision-making.
2) Extension information gathered from businesses through the U.S. about their site selection decisions and the benefits they bring to communities.
3) Specialized software that can be used to access this data quickly.

CBM Model Overview

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Community Investments
The WRDC worked with the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco to publish a special edition of Community Investments focused on rural community and economic development. Published in Spring 2007 the Center contributed by identifying topic areas and potential authors for inclusion. Additionally, the WRDC’s director, John Allen, wrote an article included in the special edition titled, “Morphing Rural Community Development Models”.

Sustainable Rural Community Development: An Annotated Bibliography
This is the first edition in what we intend to be an ongoing publication project focused on sustainable rural development. Given the importance of viable economies, ecological systems and cultural continuity we believe it is important to begin the process of developing a bibliographic repository for literature relating to sustainable development. This publication is the beginning of this effort and is part of our larger publications library, now available on our website and spanning over 30 years of outreach and research by the WRDC.

Green Entrepreneurship
John Allen and WRDC graduate research assistant, Stephanie Malin, conducted research and co-authored a paper entitled, “Green Entrepreneurship: A Method for Managing Natural Resources?” Dr. Allen presented the paper at the 12th International Symposium on Society and Resource Management held in Vancouver, British Columbia June 3-8, 2006. The manuscript was submitted to a peer reviewed journal and has been accepted for publication.

In this paper the authors draw upon case studies of small “green” and “green-green” businesses to gain an insight into how they incorporate their business into environmental and social justice causes. The findings reveal innovative models for incorporating green business into environmental causes and natural resource management.

Excerpt from Green Entrepreneurship: A Method for Managing Natural Resources?
Written by John C. Allen and Stephanie Malin
Soon to be published in Society and Natural Resources

Globalization has often pushed aside the notion that business owners can use their businesses to create household income, influence community behaviors and values, and impact natural resource management. Here, we identify patterns of social awareness described by green entrepreneurs and how they may be drawn into the natural resource management process.

We draw upon case studies of small “green” and “green green” businesses to learn how they incorporate their business into environmental and social justice causes. A few themes emerged from in-depth interviews with a sample of green entrepreneurs, including: low levels of interest in economic success; high degrees of awareness about the business’ environmental impact; and high levels of concern for social justice.

In addition, several constructs emerged, which included: personal motivation and mission, locality, and a forward-thinking orientation about sustainability. The findings reveal innovative models for incorporating green business into environmental causes and natural resource management.
eXtension Rural Entrepreneurship Community of Practice

The four RRDCs joined forces to submit this proposal “Building Local Economies of the Future: Entrepreneurship Education and Information Systems for Rural People and Places” which was funded effective October 2005 through December 2006.

The project team worked with Communities of Interest (CoI), small business owners, rural community developers, policy makers, etc. to identify their needs for entrepreneurship education and tools. The CoIs include participants from the RRDC Listening Sessions which took place across the country in 2005 and 2006. To effectively meet the eXtension requirements, each Center has formed a core team, a Community of Practice (CoP), which will guide the project based upon the information received from the Community of Interest.

A logic model worksheet has been developed which identifies the major outcomes to include:

1) Access to state-of-the-art information and education products.

2) Skill-building of the CoIs.

3) An increase in rural entrepreneurship and an increase success rate among rural entrepreneurs including their longevity.

These teams will work to develop educational products to assist with the increase and success rates of rural entrepreneurs.

Journal of the Community Development Society – Special Edition

The Center’s director John C. Allen along with Bruce Weber, Co-director of the RUPRI Rural Poverty Research Center at Oregon State University, were invited to co-edit a special edition of Community Development: Journal of the Community Development Society focusing on rural poverty and community development. Work began in August 2005 and the special edition was published in Spring 2007.

This project is a direct outcome of the Rural Poverty Research Conferences held across the U.S. in April 2005 in conjunction with the RRDCs. As co-editors of the special edition, both Centers worked in collaboration to determine which authors to invite based upon the papers they presented at these conferences.
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Multistate Coordinating Committee

The WRDC has established the Multistate Coordinating Committee, known as WERA 1005, to link Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, Missouri, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming in a combined effort to further community development in rural areas.

The Committee will conduct research, convene multistate collaborations, develop and disseminate Extension curricula and collaborate on future funding proposals. Currently the committee is working on creating a regional committee focused on entrepreneurship in rural communities.

Committee members organized and participated in a session at the Rural Sociological Society’s Annual Meeting held in Louisville, Kentucky, August 10-13, 2006.

Multistate Coordinating Committee Participation at 2006 RSS Annual Meeting

Conference Session: Economic and Civic Entrepreneurship in the Rural West: Constraints and Capacities Chair M.D.R. Evans

Rural Western Entrepreneurs’ Concerns: “Listening Posts” Exploratory Qualitative Fieldwork – John C. Allen

Participation in NxLeveL Training for Entrepreneurs: The Wyoming Experience – Roger Coupal

Banking & Rural Entrepreneurship: What We Know & What We Need to Learn – Tom Harris

Farm Entrepreneurship – Peter F. Korsching

Can Community Policy Facilitate Entrepreneurship? – Louis Swanson

Participation in NxLeveL Training: Does Delivery Structure Matter? – John C. Allen and Peter F. Korsching
WRDC Internships
To more fully engage motivated students in rural development activities, the WRDC initiated an internship program. As compensation for their work, student interns will receive pay and undergraduate or graduate credit(s) from Utah State University.

The goal of the internship program is to give students opportunities to engage in real-life rural development research or Extension activities.

Expected outcomes include:
1) Engagement across western university campuses.
2) Opportunities for students to evaluate employment opportunities in the field of rural development.
3) Preparation of tomorrow’s rural development specialists.

The WRDC interns brought a diverse range of skills and talents to the Center’s projects.

WRDC Interns FY 2006-07
Rachel Carroll-Larson
Chih-Yao Chang
Michael Jones
Stephanie Malin

WRDC Fellows
New in 2006 the WRDC launched its Fellows program and welcomed Michael J. Torrens to the Center. Mr. Torrens is the director of applied research and innovation at CFED.

He manages the Local Capital Markets Investment Fund, investing in product and market innovations. Other work includes asset-building strategies for individuals and families; tools that leverage products, services, and training for entrepreneurs; investments that strengthen the capacity of Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs); research on the links between enterprise development and poverty reduction; policies that preserve affordable rental housing; and research on key factors that link private, public, and non-profit actors, pioneering market innovations that expand economic opportunity and build assets for all Americans.

Mr. Torrens holds a B.A. from Brown University, and a Masters in Public Policy from Princeton University. As board member and volunteer he has been active in state and national policy, asset development, and affordable finance advocacy for more than 15 years.

Fellow Activities
Mr. Torrens contributed to the Center’s Spring 2007 issue of Rural Connections, its quarterly newsletter, with an article entitled “Innovations in Rural Development” wherein he discussed the growth in collaborative efforts across the nation to reinvigorate development in rural America.

Excerpt from Innovations in Rural Development
By Michael J. Torrens
Published in Rural Connections, April 2007

We’re at a point of exciting promise for rural communities everywhere. The last few years have brought a tremendous growth in collaborative work and innovation focused on the needs and potential of rural communities – our hometowns – our heartland. Whether innovation comes from understanding local and regional economies, growing community leadership and resources, building local government capacity, re-investing and growing rural assets, or linking our young people to the future of their communities, there is a wealth of hard work and energy being harnessed across our great nation.

At the same time, this work has clearly revealed that there are no magic bullets for rural development. The work required to build and strengthen our rural areas must be based on an understanding of the individual needs, strengths, and weaknesses of each community.

But do not despair, there is enough similarity between communities that much of the hard work and knowledge that is growing rural communities in other regions is useful and valuable in making plans and taking action here in the Western Region. Even better, some of the most exciting developments are happening right in our own backyard.

Nonprofit Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) like the Montana Community Development Corporation, in Missoula, have grown and spread throughout the Mountain West. They provide financing from small loans all the way up to near-equity investments, small business advice and support, and services like advanced business consulting and networks such as the Wood Utilization and Marketing Network.
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Focus Area Three

Asset-Based Community Development in Peru
Excerpt from the Ethnographic Field School Website

The Utah State University Ethnographic Field School has been providing students with classroom instruction and hands-on experience/training in ethnographic methods since 2002. Designed and coordinated by USU Professor of Anthropology Bonnie Glass-Coffin, she and her students travel to Huanchaco, Peru every other year.

Twenty years ago Huanchaco was a small fishing village but over the past 20 years its population has exploded from 1,000 residents to more than 50,000.

In response to the challenges of rapid growth facing this community, the field school shifted its focus to one of developing a model for beneficial social change emphasizing both participatory research models and Asset-Based Community Development.

Students were organized into research teams and charged with identifying local panels of community experts to inventory individual and community-wide assets and to envision, design, and carry-out grassroots development projects in conjunction with the community partners.

The field school will return to Huanchaco in 2008 where they will design and implement the next phase of the Asset-Based Community Development program.

For details, including video and reports, on the Field School and its community development program in Peru, visit their website at http://www.usu.edu/anthro/peru/2006.html.

Asset-Based Community Development Curriculum

There is growing evidence that an asset-based planning model facilitates the emergence of entrepreneurship, civic volunteerism, and motivated citizens and service providers working together to create a positive future for their rural places.

The WRDC will be publishing the curriculum co-authored by John C. Allen and Sam Cordes in both print and online versions within the coming months.

In addition, USU professor Bonnie Glass-Coffin and her students translated the curriculum into Spanish. Both versions will be available on our website for our stakeholders who will have the opportunity to use the curriculum to train citizens in an asset model of development planning.

A short video of the application of the model in Peru is also available online at http://www.usu.edu/anthro/peru/2006.html.

Expected outcomes include:
1) Increased access to Extension curricula through the web.
2) Module-based training to allow for customizing of training based on local needs and skill sets.
3) Motivated and engaged rural communities.

There is growing evidence that an asset-based planning model facilitates the emergence of entrepreneurship.
Enhance the capacity for community-led rural development. This involves identifying and maximizing human, social, and economic capital.

Southwest Marketing Network (SWMN) Project Evaluation
The WRDC has been contracted for a third year by the SWMN: Expanding Markets for Southwest Small-Scale, Alternative, and Minority Producers project to conduct an internal evaluation.

This grant-funded project is designed to increase the number and viability of farms, ranches, and food enterprises in the Four Corners states: Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah.

The goals of the project are to enhance the knowledge of service providers, including Cooperative Extension, in the areas of alternative marketing.

Expected outcomes for the Center are:

1) Increased capacity to support small western farms and ranches.

2) An expanded sustainable agriculture knowledge base that can be extended to Extension and partners.

3) Enhanced linkages with non-traditional citizens as we expand our network across the Western Region.

CIVIC CAPACITY

eCommerce Training
The Center’s Senior Program Officer, Jim Goodwin, was invited to conduct an eCommerce Training at the 2007 Southwest Marketing Network Annual Conference.

Mr. Goodwin and USU’s Eric Hawley, Associate Vice President of Information Technology, traveled to Flagstaff, Arizona, March 26-28, 2007, to conduct two, 90-minute training sessions.

Topics included an overview of eCommerce, and eCommerce Tech a discussion and demonstration of the technology needed and available for conducting business online.

“I came away from the eCommerce workshop with a lot of information on setting up a website.”

From eCommerce Workshop to Application
Hank Willie, of the North Leupp Family Farm, attended the eCommerce Workshop at the Southwest Marketing Network’s March 2007 Conference. He found the information presented at the workshop to be accessible, practical and useful.

Hank said about the workshop, “I came away from the eCommerce workshop with a lot of information on setting up a website. We’ve been talking about a website for the farm for some time and [were] not quite sure how to go about it. But I sat down the day after the workshop and went about setting one up using Google pages.”

You may see Hank’s handy work for yourself by visiting the North Leupp Family Farm’s website. http://leuppfarm googlepages.com/

The farm, located along the Little Colorado River in Arizona is owned and operated by the Navajo Nation. It is operated as an eco-friendly, sustainable farm.

Pictured above: Hank Willie, North Leupp Family Farm
Focus Area Three

Entrepreneurial Sustainable Agriculture: Alternatives for Processing, Packaging, Labeling and Marketing in Retail/Internet Environments

Current data argue for increased support of sustainable agriculture producers through solid technical training in the areas of competitive retail/Internet sales, packaging, processing, and marketing of products. Education gaps in these areas have been identified.

The goal of this project is to provide professional development training to increase the capacity of Extension faculty, USDA agency personnel, and other federal, state, or private agricultural professionals, to work with producers interested in entering retail and Internet markets.

Funded by Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (WSARE), the Entrepreneurial Sustainable Agriculture Training was held in Logan, Utah, on the Utah State University campus Tuesday, May 29, 2007.

A DVD video of the training will be available in September 2007.

The project team included:

Jim Dyer, Southwest Marketing Network
Linda Gillmor, Morgan Valley Lamb
Aaron Johnson, Food Innovation Center (Effective August 1, 2007 Dr. Johnson will be at the University of Idaho)

Kim Leval, Center for Rural Affairs
Barbara Rasco, Washington State University


The training participants came from California, Colorado, Idaho, Utah, and New York, and represented the following types of businesses/industries:

- Agriculture Education
- Community Development
- Cooperative Extension
- Economic Development
- Local Markets
- Marketing
- Non-profits
- Non-timber Forest Products
- Small Business
- Small Farm Production
- USDA Rural Development
- Value-added Products

91% The number of training participants who said they were very familiar to somewhat familiar with the services provided by Cooperative Extension and other agencies to provide assistance developing retail and Internet marketing plans.
Participants of the Entrepreneurial Sustainable Agriculture Training comprised a cross-section of agriculture producers, Extension Educators and non-profit representatives, all of whom completed a survey prior to the training regarding their familiarity and experience with marketing agriculture and non-agriculture products.

Several of their responses are summarized below and support the current data which argues for increased technical training for agriculture producers and service providers in the areas of retail and Internet marketing.

Not surprisingly, none of the respondents were very familiar with the resources available to help them produce, label and market these products with 60% of them stating they were only somewhat familiar with these resources.

When asked if they were familiar with Internet marketing techniques 74% of respondents said they were only somewhat familiar with these techniques, only 4% said they were adequately familiar, and none of them felt they were very familiar with Internet marketing techniques.

Of those who own a farm/ranch only 25% were using the Internet to market and/or sell their products while the remaining 75% were not utilizing this retail technology.

Of particular interest to Cooperative Extension, an overwhelming majority, 91%, said they were very familiar to somewhat familiar with the services provided by Cooperative Extension and other agencies to provide assistance developing retail and Internet marketing plans.

While 85% of the service providers who attended the training said they are currently assisting agriculture businesses in their area, only 30% of them felt prepared with information on resources available to assist agriculture producers.

The types of assistance these service providers are most often being asked about:

- Value-Added Opportunities
- How to market their products/business
- Funding Opportunities

75%

The number of farm/ranch owners who are not using the Internet to market and/or sell their products.
Focus Area Three

Oregonians Band Together to Benefit Rural Communities

The Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC), a partner with the Western Rural Policy Advocates, the Oregon Rural Development Council (ORDC), and the Oregon Governor's Office of Rural Policy cooperated to launch the Oregon Rural Policy Forum in May 2006.

The event targeted key rural policy issues to move forward during Oregon's 2007 Legislative Session.

Rural Oregon Day, conducted February 12, 2007 in Salem served to highlight the rural policy proposals developed during the state's Forum which included initiatives on health care, affordable housing, rural entrepreneurship, and workforce and education as the majority of the 200 participants met with State Legislators to let leaders know that, "Every Day is Rural Oregon Day!"

The Oregon Policy Forum recommendation for long term water planning has led to state agency and legislative support for the Oregon Water Supply and Conservation Initiative and was included in the Governor's Budget Recommendation.

Plans are underway for the 2008 Rural Oregon Day and you may keep up to date on their activities by visiting their website ruraloregon.org.

To learn more about the Rural Community Assistance Corporation, visit their website http://www.rcac.org/.

Oregon’s State Rural Policy Forum included initiatives on health care, affordable housing, rural entrepreneurship, and workforce and education.
**Western Rural Policy Advocates**

We understand the complexity of the issues facing rural communities in the Western U.S. WRPA is actively working to elevate a unified Rural Voice to more effectively improve the quality of life in our region by facilitating rural policy forums.

The rural communities of the West need a consistent shortlist of policy statements and priorities for Legislative attention, advocacy, action and follow-up. The WRDC, in partnership with the Rural Community Assistance Corporation and the Center for Rural Affairs, have created a joint committee called the Western Rural Policy Advocates.

Three state policy workshops will be held in Western states as funding and organizational capacity allow. It is currently planned to hold policy forums in Utah and Idaho. Following these initial forums Rural Policy Statewide Summits in Utah and Idaho will be planned for 2008.

The Western Rural Policy Advocates (WRPA) will conduct a series of local rural policy forums around critical issues impacting rural communities, beginning in Utah and Idaho.

These organizations have identified a Graduate Intern from Utah State University to perform research, data compilation, literature reviews, documenting case studies and community stories, and other logistical support as needed. This provides an excellent opportunity for tomorrow’s community development professionals to gain practical experience while completing their education.

Rural Advocacy involves educating stakeholders about critical issues that affect people living in rural areas. We believe ‘community self-empowerment’ is essential to ensure rural viability which we achieve through education and advocacy.

Utah held its first of several policy forums in Price, Utah, on June 29, 2007 which included participants from Carbon, Emery, Grand and San Juan Counties. This forum was co-sponsored by:

- Carbon County Economic Development
- Castle County
- College of Eastern Utah

The second policy forum is scheduled for September 27, 2007 in Blackfoot, Idaho. This forum will be co-sponsored by Idaho Rural Partners and others.

The WRPA goals are to:

1) Recognize the connection between local and legislative leadership, community capacity building and effective rural advocacy.

2) Help build the capacity of communities by increasing their knowledge and ability to address issues.

3) Assist with creating policy by educating leaders about the importance of rural programs and policy.

4) Highlight their challenges and successes through rural advocacy and policy forum trainings.

5) Help western rural communities build the knowledge and skills necessary to elevate their “rural policy voice” in state legislatures.
Community Response to Rapid Energy Development

The WRDC’s director in collaboration with USU professors Susan Dawson and Gary Madsen have developed a research study entitled “Integrating Interactional Field and Rational Choice Theories to Enhance Understanding of Rural Community Responses to Rapid Energy Development”.

The research team spent two separate weeks in a rural community conducting face-to-face interviews with individuals throughout the community. The data they collected has been entered into NetDraw software which is incorporated into UCINET for Windows: Software for Social Network Analysis which creates maps of the network for analysis. This software programming work is supported by Utah State University Graduate Research Assistant, Chih-Yao Chang.

The study examines the networking relationships of the various entities involved in energy development. The theoretical framework which underlies this position is that relationships between institutional entities, such as energy exploration companies and local governments, do not occur in the abstract. Individuals are embedded in this process as networks of relationships develop and change over time. From the framework of interactional field theory and rational choice theory, the research team has developed several testable hypotheses which can help in understanding how rural communities cope with rapid energy development.

The understanding of social networks and the role they play in community development has largely been ignored in previous research concerning community responses to energy development and yet this information is vital for communities to understand the interrelatedness, or lack thereof, of their key decision-makers and leaders. Without this knowledge of their own networks, communities may be missing opportunities for development that would benefit the community as well as the natural resource developers.

The analysis used in this study will include three compatible methodologies. They include contextual analysis, graphing of network structures, and quantitative network analysis.

To date the research team has presented three papers. The first, “Integrating Interaction Field Theory and Rational Choice Theory to Enhance Understanding of Rural Community Response to Rapid Energy Development”, was presented at the annual meeting of the Rural Sociological Society in Louisville, Kentucky, August 2006.


The third paper, “Network Analysis as a Method for Understanding the Dynamics of Natural Resource Management in Rural Communities,” was presented at the International Symposium on Society and Natural Resource Management in Park City, Utah, June 2007.
Excerpt from
Understanding Rural Community Conflict Using Network Analysis: A Case Study of a Proposed Coal-Fired Power Plant in the Southwestern United States

By Susan E. Dawson, Gary E. Madsen, John C. Allen and Chih-Yao Chang
Soon to be published by Inter-Disciplinary Press, Oxford, United Kingdom

China, India, and the United States by 2012 are expected to emit 2.7 billion additional tons of carbon dioxide from coal-fired power plants. The U.S. is considering building about 150 plants that are controversial because of greenhouse-gas emissions and environmental toxins.

This paper is based upon a case study of a rural Southwestern U.S. homogeneous community in which a proposed coal-fired power plant is creating community conflict over economic, health, environmental, and quality of life issues. The study was initiated because of a recent oil strike in the community; however, it soon became apparent that the plant siting was the major focus of controversy rather than the oil strike.

We conducted 31 interviews using network mapping, analyzing network structures that were focused on the power plant controversy. In the interviews, the respondents discussed their perceptions of economic development. Two fairly distinct social network cliques were identified with little interaction taking place between them. One was largely supportive of the plant, while the other was largely opposed. Within each clique, there were some who were opposed mainly to the plant location. We present qualitative data that identify the different types of reasoning behind the respondents’ support or non-support of the power plant. In addition, an indication of public positions on the issue is presented.

Theoretical issues involving NIMBY (not-in-my-backyard) are discussed in light of the complexity of the responses identified in this case study. Important environmental justice implications are discussed regarding groups and decision-making. Unlike many environmental justice studies, the major players in this conflict are represented by powerful individuals within the community. Mapping these network structures and identifying the major reasons for support or non-support of the coal-fired power plant may point to an emerging pattern of community responses to such environmental issues.

Enhance the quality of natural resources and their management, and inform land use decisions in the rural West.
Marketing, Informing and Educating

In 2004 the WRDC’s Board of Directors requested increased efforts to market and promote both the Center and the programs offered through the Center’s partnerships by informing and educating stakeholders about the activities and resources provided by the Center.

In response to this request, the WRDC continues to update its website and produce publications to inform and educate its stakeholders.

Website

The WRDC’s website has been redesigned for easier access to materials and current news, events, publications and resources.

The website is no longer a stagnant library of information but a dynamic and frequently updated resource for our stakeholders.

Publications

Community Development: Journal of the Community Development Society – Spring 2007
Special Issue: Poverty and Community Development
Guest Editors: John C. Allen and Bruce A. Weber

Rural Connections
September 2006
Feature Topic: High-Amenity Public Lands
“As the 21st Century unfolds before us we are faced with the issue of what the economic structure of rural places in the West will be and what role public lands may hold in that new economy.”

April 2007
Feature Topic: Arts-Based Community Development and Sustainable Community Development
“Researchers on Western communities are finding that amenities, natural resources, vistas, and cultural uniqueness are attracting new residents and visitors to these often remote rural places.”

Sustainable Rural Community Development: An Annotated Bibliography – June 2007

Communities across the Western Region are confronted with issues linked to infrastructure, water, renewable resources and energy, social and cultural artifacts, and economy. This collection provides easy access to research and resources.
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Sounding off about Rural Entrepreneurship in the West -- July 2007
The WRDC held entrepreneurial listening sessions throughout the western U.S. in an effort to hear from as many entrepreneurs and rural community development practitioners as possible. This report summarizes the thoughts, concerns and ideas of the more than 275 participants.

Cognizant of the diverse experiences of Western entrepreneurs, the WRDC felt it necessary to hear the voices of various populations throughout the region. With this in mind, our listening sessions were conducted throughout the West, in the following locations:

Billings, Montana
Bismarck, North Dakota
Coachella, California
Coeur d’Alene, Idaho
Espanola, New Mexico
Fresno, California
Price, Utah
Puyallup, Washington
Spokane, Washington
Twin Falls, Idaho
Winslow, Arizona

Sounding off about Rural Entrepreneurship in the West

This WRDC report summarizes the state of rural entrepreneurship in the West. Most notably are the policy issues that came to the forefront during the listening sessions and these are summarized below.

Policy Concerns
Need for affordable healthcare programs for entrepreneurs, if not universal healthcare for all.

Need to define what rural is and what being rural means for listening session communities.

Need for less “red tape” and better access to federal, state, and local funding, grants and scholarships.

Need for more training dollars to schools and local community organizations.

Change in tax structure, so as to reward local small business ventures, not just big box stores.

Change in zoning laws so as to welcome local small business ventures and diversify neighborhoods.
Sponsorships
The WRDC contributed financial support to the following professional associations and/or events between July 2006 and June 2007.

International Symposium on Society and Resource Management
Park City, Utah
June 17-20, 2007

Community Development Society Annual Meeting
Appleton, Wisconsin
June 17-20, 2007

Senator Bennett’s 6th Annual Rural Business Conference
Logan, Utah
May 30-31, 2007

National Diversity Conference
Seattle, Washington
April 25-26, 2007

2007 Sustainability Conference
Logan, Utah
April 17, 2007

NACDEP
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
April 16-19, 2007

69th Meeting of the Rural Sociological Society
Louisville, Kentucky
August 10-13, 2006

Bioneers Conference
Logan, Utah
October 20-22, 2006

EVOLVE Workshop
Jackson Hole, Wyoming
October 17-19, 2006

Managing Drought and Water Scarcity in Vulnerable Environments
Boulder, Colorado
September 18-20, 2006

Carbon County Economic Summit (Utah)
Price, Utah
August 2006

Exhibits
The WRDC in conjunction with the other three Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDC) exhibited at the following events during the year.

ISSRM
Park City, Utah
June 17-20, 2007

Community Development Society
Appleton, Wisconsin
June 17-20, 2007

Senator Bennett’s 6th Annual Rural Business Conference
May 30-31, 2007
Logan, Utah

Entrepreneurial Sustainable Agriculture Training
May 29, 2007
Logan, Utah

National Diversity Conference
Seattle, Washington
April 25-26, 2007

NACDEP
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
April 16-19, 2007

69th Annual Meeting of the Rural Sociological Society
Louisville, Kentucky
August 10-13, 2006

Participants from Espanola’s Listening Session
**Director's Presentations**

The Center’s director dedicates many hours a year to informing and educating the region and nation on rural issues and innovative programming to address the needs of rural people.

- **SIA Mock Project for Graduate Students**
  For the Innovation and Insights in Teaching About Society, Natural Resources and Environment: A Participatory Workshop
  ISSRM Conference
  Park City, Utah
  June 17-20, 2007

- **Generating Funding for Graduate Student Research and Educational Opportunities**
  ISSRM Graduate Forum
  Logan, Utah
  June 2007

- **Green Entrepreneurship: A Method for Managing Natural Resources?**
  WRDC Multistate Coordinating Committee Meeting
  Reno, Nevada
  May 7-8, 2007

- **The Role of Community in Supporting Local Entrepreneurship**
  MarketPlace Conference
  Kearney, Nebraska
  February 28, 2007

- **Drawing in the Rest of the Community**
  MarketPlace Conference
  Kearney, Nebraska
  February 28, 2007

- **WRDC Report**
  Regional Rural Development Center’s Joint Meeting
  Nebraska City, Nebraska
  November 15-16, 2006

- **Research Issues Emerging from the National Entrepreneurial Listening Sessions**
  RUPRI-ERS Meeting
  Washington, D.C.
  October 27, 2006

**WRDC’s Response to Emerging Issues in the West**

- **ESS/AES/ARD Workshop**
  Lake Tahoe, Nevada
  September 24-27, 2006

- **Integrating Interaction Field Theory and Rational Choice Theory to Enhance Understanding of Rural Community Response to Rapid Energy Development**
  Annual Meeting of the Rural Sociological Society
  Louisville, Kentucky
  August 10-13, 2006

- **Leveraging and Partnerships: Models of Engagement in the Rural American West**
  Oregon State University
  Corvallis, Oregon
  November 20, 2006

- **Integrating Rural Sociology and Economic Development into Agriculture Sciences and College of Natural Resources Curricula**
  The National Academies of Science
  Washington, D.C.
  October 4, 2006

- **Rural/Urban Interface: Convergence and Divergence of Issues**
  Western Mid-Managers Conference
  Monterey, California
  July 11, 2006

- **WRDC Overview**
  WAAESD Meeting
  Monterey, California
  July 10, 2006

- **Making Collaboration Work**
  Workshop on Collaborative and Watershed Management and Research in the Great Basin
  Reno, Nevada
  November 29, 2006

- **Entrepreneurship as a Development Strategy**
  Western CARET Representatives
  Monterey, California
  July 11, 2006
Administrative Activities

Fundraising
The WRDC continues to consider applying for those grants that are in alignment with its four focus areas to further increase the capacity of its partners.

The current and impending economic climate in the U.S. is forcing the Center to become more entrepreneurial in its approach to funding. It is projected that within the next two years there will be a reduction of federal grant monies available. In turn this will lead to increased competition for program and research dollars.

Therefore, the Center realizes it is imperative to begin planning for future funding sources, and has identified the following four components as essential to increasing its funding:

1) Increase the Center’s competitiveness in securing grant monies at the national, regional and foundation level.
2) Increase the number of contracts.
3) Increase the number of sponsorships.
4) Identify and solicit individual funds.
5) Develop each proposal to capture overhead expenses and ensure budgets are managed on a cost recovery basis.
6) The Center will also be reviewing the ‘products’ it develops and assessing the viability of marketing and selling.

Grant Proposal Submission
Southwest and High Plains Sub-Regional Showcase Conferences
Funding Organization: Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education
Principal Investigators: Dennis Lamb, Colorado State University; Jim Dyer, Southwest Marketing Network; and John C. Allen, Western Rural Development Center
Award Status: Funded

Civic Science Application in the Klamath Basin
Funding Organization: Northwest Area Foundation
Principal Investigators: Jonathan Kusel, Sierra Institute for Community and Environment and John C. Allen, Western Rural Development Center
Award Status: Pending

Funding
The Center applied for, received and expended a portion of the following grant monies in the 2006-07 fiscal year (July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007):

Entrepreneurial Sustainable Agriculture: Alternatives for Processing, Packaging and Labeling in Retail/Internet Environments
Funding Organization: Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education
Amount Funded: $58,755
**Connecting throughout the Region**

The WRDC strives to engage citizens, rural businesses, Extension professionals, researchers, faculty, local government officials, agencies and non-profits from across our region through the delivery of programming and training, and serving as a conduit, catalyst and convener to information and resources.

The map below indicates states wherein the Center has conducted trainings, provided resources, or from where people have come to be engaged in our sponsored programming.

[Map of connecting 13 western states and 4 U.S. territories]
Board of Directors

Dr. Noelle Cockett, Chair
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Dean, College of Agriculture
Utah State University

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Economic Research Service
USDA

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Cayuse Technologies

Dr. Sally Maggard
Federal Liaison
National Program Leader
CSREES-ECS
USDA

The WRDC has actively engaged in partnership-building activities with institutions, agencies, NGOs and the private sector throughout its region. This is a sampling of partners the Center collaborated with during the year. We thank them for their continued support.
Partnerships

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American Indian Higher Education Consortium
Association of Extension Administrators
Association of Research Directors
California Association for Microenterprise Opportunity
Carbon County Economic Development Center for Rural Affairs
College of Southern Idaho
Colorado Institute of Public Policy
Colorado State University
CHARO Community Development Corporation in Riverside
Desert Alliance for Community Empowerment in Coachella
Eastern Utah District of Rehabilitation Services
Economic Research Service, USDA
Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council
Farm Foundation
Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco
Food Innovation Center
Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission
Hopi Foundation
Hopi Tribe
Idaho Commerce and Labor
Idaho Economic Development Association
Idaho Rural Partnership
Idaho Small Business Development Center
Intertribal Agriculture Council
Morgan Valley Lamb
Montana Business Incubator at MSU Billings
Montana State University
National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals
National Rural Funders Collaborative
Navajo County
Navajo Nation
Native American Community Development Corporation
New Mexico State University
North Central Research and Extension Center
North Central Regional Center for Rural Development
North Dakota State University Extension Service
Northeast Rural Development Center
Northwest Area Foundation
Office of Senator Robert Bennett
Office of Senator Mike Crapo
Oregon State University
Partners for Prosperity
RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship
RUPRI Poverty Research Center
Region IV Development
Regional Development Corporation
Rural Community Assistance Corporation
Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI)
Rural Sociological Society
Sierra Institute of Community and Environment
Southern Rural Development Center
Southwest Marketing Network
United Tribes Technical College
University of Arizona
University of California-Davis
University of California-Northern New Mexico
University of Idaho
University of Minnesota Extension
University of Nevada-Reno
University of Wyoming
USDA Rural Development
Utah Department of Rural Economic Development
Utah State University
W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Washington State’s Small Business Development Center
Washington State University
WSU Puyallup Research and Extension Center
WSU - Spokane
WRDC
Engaging the future.