



The Western Rural Development Center (WRDC) hosted a convening of Extension Community Development Specialists on July 26 – 27, 2011 at the Grove Hotel in Boise, Idaho. The meeting was held in conjunction with the annual meetings of the Community Development Society and the Rural Sociological Society.

Those in attendance included:

Don Albrecht	Western Rural Development Center
Bob Gorman	University of Alaska-Fairbanks
Buddy Borden	University of Nevada-Reno
David Campbell	University of California-Davis
Deborah Giraud	University of California-Davis
Marion Bentley	Utah State University
Michael Patrick	New Mexico State University
Paul Lachappelle	Montana State University
Barbara Andreozzi	Montana State University
Debra Kollock	Washington State University
Harriet Shaklee	University of Idaho
Lorie Higgins	University of Idaho
Kathee Tift	University of Idaho
Lyle Hansen	University of Idaho
Willem Braak	University of Idaho
Lou Swanson	Colorado State University

### **State Reports and Programs**

During the two-day conference, each state gave a report on community development programs within their state. Some outstanding and successful programs were described on issues that included:

- Youth entrepreneurship
- Business retention and expansion
- Good governance
- Farm succession
- Public lands
- Poverty
- Leadership development



Through this process, participants were able to learn about successful programs being offered in other states and learn how to more effectively implement similar programs in their own state.

### **Regional Community Development Programs**

Discussed how to offer community development programs across state lines. In the current economy, no state has the resources to offer all of the programs that are needed, or that they would like to offer, and hiring additional personnel to meet these needs is out of the question.

Approaches discussed included:

1. Having states with expertise in one area offer full programs or train-the-trainer programs in another state in return for similar services from other states.
2. Organizing multi-state groups around particular issue areas and having specialists jointly hired by multiple states under the administration of the WRDC.

### **Emerging Issues**

We discussed emerging areas of concern where Extension programming is limited and how to address these concerns as a region.

Among the issues discussed in this regard were:

1. Rapidly growing minority populations
2. Rural health

### **Regional Programs Currently Being Offered**

1. Stronger Economies Together (SET) – This is a cooperative program between the Regional Rural Development Centers and USDA – Rural Development. This program is being implemented jointly by USDA – Rural Development and Extension. The program provides about 35 hours of training for multi-county teams and includes assisting the regional team develop a strategic plan and then seek approaches for economic development that meets the criteria of their strategic plan. New Mexico and Arizona were selected to be a part of Phase I of the SET program. These states have neared the completion of the training program. Colorado and Washington have been selected for Phase II. Participants from the Phase II states were able to learn a great deal from the experiences of the Phase I states.
2. Community Business Matching Model (CBM) – This model has been developed by researchers and extension specialists in the west, and is based on both business needs and community assets and preferences.



Based on data from both businesses and the community, a compatibility index is computed which helps communities selectively target industries and be much more efficient in the economic development efforts. This model has been used with great success in Montana and Nevada and is beginning to be implemented in other states as well. At the Boise meeting, participants who are experienced with CBM were able to explain the model to other participants.

### **Upcoming Activities**

The WRDC in conjunction with its CDES partners will provide a half-day best practices workshop on “Youth Entrepreneurship” programs prior to the 2012 NACDEP meeting.

Periodic conference calls to discuss how to regionally deal with issues such as evaluation, translation, and views about fees for services rendered.

### **Mark your calendars!**

The group will **next meet in Park City, Utah in May 2012 in conjunction with the National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) annual meeting.**

