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. This material is based upon work that is supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under award number 2015-51150-23875.
DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE

We have completed another busy and productive year at the Western Rural Development Center. As this Annual Report indicates, our activities have been many and varied.

We have worked closely with our partners from throughout the West and the rest the nation seeking to address the problems and concerns of rural America. As in previous years, I especially enjoyed my interactions with the residents and leaders of rural communities throughout the West. I have been impressed with their dedication and resilience as they seek to find solutions to complex problems. While data clearly show that many people in rural America are struggling with inadequate employment, high rates of poverty, substance abuse, and other problems, my visits have allowed me to see the human side of these statistics. Getting to know the people of rural America has made me even more committed to finding solutions, and I remain hopeful that solutions can be found and implemented.

I am aware that rural people lack the political clout to effectively address problems by themselves. Rural people comprise only about 15% of the population. Consequently, elected officials primarily represent urban populations and are most concerned about addressing urban interests and issues. Partly as a consequence, attempts to address the problems of rural America are often ignored. When not ignored, resulting policies are often ill informed and have little chance of bringing success. It is critical that those of us working in rural America do a better job of getting accurate and unbiased information to decision makers so that better policies can be implemented.

In continuing our efforts to assist rural communities and their residents, we look forward to the coming year. As we move forward, I wish to express my appreciation to our many colleagues and partners. In particular, I am indebted to the extremely capable assistance of Brent Elrod, our National Program Leader at NIFA (National Institute of Food and Agriculture).

It is also a pleasure for me to work with the employees of the other Regional Rural Development Centers. I appreciate the guidance and direction we receive from our Board of Directors, especially our Board’s Chair, Ken White. Much of the success we have enjoyed at the Western Rural Development Center through the years is a direct result of the skills and talents of our Assistant Director Betsy Newman. We are excited to now have Deanna Thompson who joined our team in August 2016. It is a pleasure to work with such capable people and it makes me very excited about the future.
THE OVERARCHING GOAL OF THE WESTERN RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER IS TO HELP RURAL COMMUNITIES PROSPER, THRIVE ECONOMICALLY, AND BECOME SELF-SUSTAINING.
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 Extension for the prosperity of western rural communities.

GOALS
The Western Rural Development Center works as a regional catalyst to strengthen rural communities by sharing scientific discovery and application of sustainable practices with researchers, Extension educators, and community development practitioners via conferences, trainings, workshops, and publications. The overarching goal is to help rural communities prosper, thrive economically, and become self-sustaining.

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

2016 PROJECTS
This report highlights some of our work from 2016 within our three priority areas, each having a regional focus and a national impact.
The purpose of a Western Rural Development Center Community Development Fellows Program (CDFP) is to advance applied community development at land-grant universities and other organizations and institutions with an interest in the rural areas of the western region. The program engages its Fellows to directly contribute their knowledge and expertise to the Center’s mission of building Extension capacity in the West.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FELLOWS
Marion Bentley, Utah State University Extension
Buddy Borden, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension
Steve Daniels, Utah State University
Kathryn Dodge, University of Alaska Fairbanks
Jody Gale, Utah State University Extension
Thomas Harris, University of Nevada, Reno
Mary Martin, University of Wyoming Extension
J. Michael Patrick, New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service
L. Steven Smutko, University of Wyoming Extension

FELLOWS CONTRIBUTE TO WRDC PROJECTS
Marion Bentley - ASAP Team and Delivery in Utah
Buddy Borden - ASAP Team
Kathryn Dodge, WRDC Board of Directors (effective 2017)
Jody Gale - ASAP Delivery in Utah
Thomas Harris - ASAP Team
Mary Martin - CDEI 2016 & WRDC Board Meeting
J. Michael Patrick - SET & ASAP in New Mexico
Steve Smutko - CDEI 2016 & WRDC Board Meeting
The Western Rural Development Center’s Area Sector Analysis Process team continues taking their on-the-ground work and developing train-the-trainer materials for use by Extension, as well as guiding communities through the process itself. 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. ASAP has already been successfully applied to several communities across the region including Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, and Utah.

The ASAP team applied for and received a 2017 AFRI Grant from USDA NIFA to continue to improve the ASAP model and to conduct research utilizing data collected from the process. The goal is to increase the team’s capacity to help the residents and communities of the rural West.

ASAP assists communities in targeted, sustainable economic development 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 TEAM
Don Albrecht, Western Rural Development Center
Marion Bentley, Utah State University Extension
Buddy Borden, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension
Thomas Harris, University of Nevada-Reno
Paul Jakus, Utah State University
Malieka Landis, University of Nevada-Reno
Paul Lewin, University of Idaho Extension
Phil Watson, University of Idaho

2016-17 ASAP COMMUNITIES
Valley County, Idaho; Cibola County, New Mexico; White Pine County, Nevada; and Lewiston, Utah. Utah Counties: Wayne, Grand, Garfield, Juab, Millard, Sanpete, Sevier, Piute, and San Juan.
The Center’s Western Regional Coordinating Committee, “Addressing the Rural Development Concerns of the Rural West,” is a Western Education and Extension Research Activity (WDC35) that provides an opportunity to bring Extension professionals, faculty, researchers, community leaders, and policy makers together to better understand rural western issues and develop programs to address them. The committee held their annual meeting in Jackson, Wyoming, May 22, 2016, in conjunction with the Community Development Extension Institute.

WERA REGIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES
The WERA Regional Coordinating Committee will work together to:

1. Develop funding proposals to conduct research to better understand the critical rural development concerns described below. Research results will be published in professional journals, policy briefs, WRDC publications, and through other means.

2. Initiate appropriate and needed educational and training programs and deliver these programs via direct training, webinars, policy briefs or other means to community residents and leaders, extension personnel and others.

3. Make informed policy recommendations based on research findings and communication with community leaders.

2016 WERA COMMITTEE MEMBERS
Don Albrecht, Western Rural Development Center
Marion Bentley, Utah State University Extension
Roger Coupal, University of Wyoming
Wes Curtis, Southern Utah University
Melissa Hamilton, University of Idaho
Ashley Kerna, University of Arizona
Malieka Landis, University of Nevada-Reno
Michael Patrick, NMSU Cooperative Extension Service
Julie Suhr Pierce, U.S. DOI Bureau of Land Management
Duane Williams, University of Wyoming Extension
The 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 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.

SBIR TRAINING MODULES

Introduction to the SBIR Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program
Module One – SBIR Overview
Module Two – Developing Your Idea
Module Three – Preparing and Submitting Your Proposal

The training modules are available on the Center’s website at wrdc.usu.edu/htm/sbir.

SBIR OUTREACH TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TEAM
Don Albrecht, Western Rural Development Center
Scott Dockum, SBIR Program Coordinator/COR, USDA NIFA
Brent Elrod, National Program Leader, USDA NIFA
José Garcia Pabon, Washington State University (Western Region)
Roberto Gallardo, Mississippi State University (Southern Region)
Winifred McGee, The Pennsylvania State University (Northeastern Region)
John Mann, Michigan State University (North Central Region)
The **Extension Sustainability Summit**, held in Portland, Oregon, April 5-7, 2016, was designed to **engage** Extension faculty, agents, and professionals **in a robust dialogue** about the Extension sustainability outreach efforts currently offered, to **identify** needed areas of outreach and professional development, and **help shape a national strategic plan on sustainability**. The Summit offered over 20 interactive sessions organized around the five themes of sustainability: Air/Climate, Energy, Food, Land, and Water.

Summit attendees participated in five lightning sessions each focused on one of the Summit’s five themes wherein they **identified and discussed gaps in Extension outreach**. Read the summaries in the ESS Impact Evaluation and Lightning Sessions Summaries available at [wrdc.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/pub__2500919.pdf](http://wrdc.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/pub__2500919.pdf).


**PLANNING COMMITTEE**
Roslynn Brain, Chair, Utah State University Extension
Mark Apel, University of Arizona Extension
Gregg Garfin, University of Arizona Extension
Larry Lev, Oregon State University Extension Service
Bob Simmons, Washington State University Extension
Cary Weiner, Colorado State University Extension

**ESS SPONSORS**
Oregon State University Extension Service
Utah State University Extension Sustainability
USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture
Western Rural Development Center

**ESS EVALUATION RESULTS**

- **QUALITY OF THE SUMMIT**
  
  1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent)
  
  = 4.51

- **QUALITY OF SUMMIT PRESENTERS**
  
  1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent)
  
  = 4.43

- **LIKELIHOOD OF APPLYING WHAT WAS LEARNED**
  
  1 (Not at all Likely) to 5 (Extremely Likely)
  
  = 4.41
The popular **Community Development Extension Institute (CDEI)** was held May 22-25, 2016, in Jackson, Wyoming. The Institute was designed by Extension professionals for Extension and other agency personnel who find themselves working with communities. The Institute offered Basic and Advanced Skill-Building Sessions, plus Best Practices Sessions on community development programming. All sessions were led by experienced trainers and presenters.

Institute presentations available at [wrdc.usu.edu/htm/programs/cdei2016/](wrdc.usu.edu/htm/programs/cdei2016/).

**CDEI PLANNING COMMITTEE**
Duane Williams, Chair, University of Wyoming Extension
Monica Babine, Washington State University Extension
Debra Hansen, Washington State University Extension
Lorie Higgins, University of Idaho Extension
Mary Martin, University of Wyoming Extension
Kathee Tifft, University of Idaho Extension

**CDEI SPONSORS**
Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Wyoming
University of Wyoming Extension
Utah State University Extension
Western Rural Development Center

**CDEI EVALUATION RESULTS**

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<th>Quality of the Institute</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
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<td>47%</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality of Trainers/Presenters</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>47%</td>
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<tr>
<th>Likelihood of Applying What Was Learned</th>
<th>Extremely Likely</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
<th>Likely</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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RURAL CONNECTIONS

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

SPRING 2016
This issue of Rural Connections includes eight articles written by western land-grant university faculty and agency researchers. The authors discuss a myriad of topics ranging from tribal food security, preparing youth for today’s economy, participatory watershed assessment, linking farmers with chefs, western county economies, illicit drug abuse in rural areas, aging in your home, and irrigation technology. It also includes an introduction by the WRDC Director Don Albrecht.

FALL 2016
This issue of Rural Connections includes nine articles from western researchers, Extension educators, and professionals on a wide range of topics including leveraging federal land management investments, mapping mine waste impoundments, along with access to rural health care to Oregon’s WealthWorks Northwest, a drought curriculum for the Great Basin, arts in Nevada, federal forest land compensation to rural communities, and the energy boom in the West. Plus, irrigation alternatives for growing processing tomatoes.

To view/download past issues visit wrdc.usu.edu/htm/rural-connections
WESTERN POLICY BRIEFS
The Western Policy Briefs are published by the Western Rural Development Center to deliver timely, policy-relevant information on topics of importance to the western United States.

WHAT DOES THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC LAND IMPLY FOR FEDERAL LAND TRANSFERS
This policy brief discusses the author’s analysis of land ownership patterns in the Mountain West and the policy implications of public land transfers. Read or download at wrdc.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/pub__3361871.pdf.

BUILDING A VIBRANT AND RESILIENT 21ST CENTURY RURAL ECONOMY
This policy brief outlines the characteristics of a vibrant and resilient rural economy in the 21st century, and then describes factors within the community’s control that can be utilized to achieve this goal. Read or download the brief by visiting wrdc.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/pub__5763729.

UPCOMING BOOKS
“Rural Housing and Economic Development” – Edited by Don Albrecht, Scott Loveridge, Stephan Goetz, and Rachel Welborn. This book consists of 14 chapters written by experts and scholars from throughout the country on a range of issues such as housing on reservations, rental housing, mobile homes, and housing in energy boomtowns. We have signed a contract with Routledge Press to publish this book.

“Local Adaptation to Climate Change” – Edited by Paul Lachapelle and Don Albrecht. This book will consist of 17 chapters written by experts from throughout the country on successful programs regarding local adaptation to climate change. We have signed a contract with Routledge Press to publish this book.
PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

The Western Rural Development Center’s director, Don Albrecht, is not one for sitting still or staying in one place. He traveled 41,705 miles in 2016 to meet with current and future project partners.

A partial list of the agencies/organizations Don met with during his travels:

- Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU)
- Bureau of Land Management
- Center for Large Landscape Conservation, Bozeman, Montana
- Council on Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics (CFARE)
- County Commissioners and Economic Development Directors throughout the West
- Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP)
- Mayors and City Councils throughout the West
- National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP)
- National Association of Counties (NACo)
- National Association of Development Organizations (NADO)
- National League of Cities
- National Rural Electric Cooperative Association
- Rural Community Consultants
- Rural Planning Group State of Utah Governor’s Office – Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office
- State of Utah Governor’s Office of Economic Development (GOED)
- State of Utah Department of Workforce Services
- State of Utah Governor’s Office of Energy Development
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- U.S. Economic Development Administration
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- U.S. Forest Service
- USDA Rural Development (RD)
- USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)
- USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS)
- USDA Economic Research Service (ERS)
- USDA Rural Housing Service (RHS)
- USDA Rural Business Cooperative Service
- USDA Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)
- USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)
- Utah League of Cities and Towns
- Western Extension Directors Association
- Western Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
- World Trade Center Utah
SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE

SOCIAL MEDIA STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS

Facebook - A look at our audience:
56% Female (unchanged since 2015)
42% Male (unchanged since 2015)
• Posts reached 2,111 individuals (compared to 1,974 individuals in 2015)
• The majority of our Facebook followers hail from the western U.S.

Twitter - A look at our followers:
56% Female (compared to 59% in 2015)
44% Male (compared to 41% in 2015)
38% of our followers live in the West
• Tweets earned 37,680 impressions. This is down significantly from 127,600 in 2015 when the Center had an intern dedicated to social media engagement.
• During our peak months of April and May we averaged 145 impressions per day (down from 856 in 2015).

Website
56,657 unique visitors (compared to 49,653 in 2015)
116,845 visits (compared to 80,028 in 2015)
363,941 page views (compared to 202,529 in 2015)

The Western Rural Development Center continues to use social media to listen, discover, share, and engage on topics related to living in the West. Efforts were made in 2016 to maintain our social media presence by sharing relevant information and engaging with followers through Facebook and Twitter.

facebook.com/westernrural  twitter.com/westernrural  wrdc.usu.edu
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 2016 to secure additional funding from the institutions and agencies listed below.

**2015-16 LEVERAGED FUNDS:**

- Utah State University Cooperative Extension
- Utah Agricultural Experiment Station
- Michigan State University (Sub-Recipient CAPE Project)
- Small Business Innovation Research Outreach and Technical Assistance Training Program
The Western Rural Development Center, established by the Rural Development Act of 1972 “to provide for improving the economy and living conditions in rural America,” works closely with the land-grant colleges and universities throughout its region to promote excellence in research, education, and Extension, and build Extension’s capacity in the West.

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, MT
Chief Dull Knife College, MT
Dine College, AZ
Fort Belknap College, MT
Fort Peck Community College, MT
Institute of American Indian Arts, NM
Little Big Horn College, MT
Navajo Technical College, NM
Northwest Indian College, WA
Salish Kootenai College, MT
Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, NM
Stone Child College, MT
Tohono O’Odham Community College, AZ
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.

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.