

RuralCONNECTIONSMONTHLY

A newsletter of the Western Rural Development Center

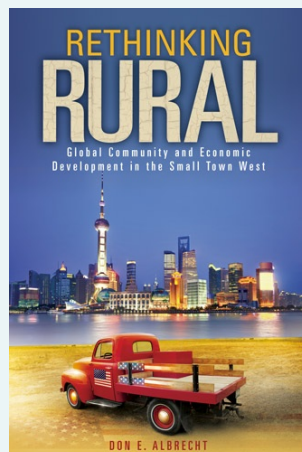
CENTER NEWS.

New Book by WRDC Director

Rethinking Rural: Global Community and Economic Development in the Small Town West

Rethinking Rural summarizes characteristics of the isolation, mass society, and global society eras. It offers guidance to community leaders, policy makers, and scholars seeking ways to address poverty, increasing inequality, and shifting demographics, as well as resource management and conservation issues.

When Don Albrecht first assumed his role as director of the Western Rural Development Center in 2008, he spent months traveling to each state in the Center's 13-state region conducting rural development roundtables. The roundtables were funded by the Farm Foundation and locally coordinated by a Cooperative Extension Specialist. The intention of the roundtables was to gain an understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing communities in the Rural West. From this months-long journey the WRDC created its [five-year strategic plan](#) and Don began writing the book. Since then he has continued to travel the region meeting with a multitude of experts and community leaders discussing innovative ways the West's rural communities are adjusting to thrive economically, and observing the economic shifts that have occurred throughout the West.



Excerpt from *Rethinking Rural*...

It is abundantly clear that rural America is entering a totally new era. After passing through eras sociologists have labeled "Small Town in Isolation" (roughly the years from early settlement to 1950) and "Small Town in Mass Society" (about 1950 to 1980), rural America is entering a new era that I call "Small Town in Global Society." The implications of this new era are immense, especially for the rural West. Traditional primary sources of employment (agriculture, the natural resource industries, and manufacturing) continue to decline. Once-prosperous communities are now struggling. Major geopolitical changes and technological breakthroughs have reduced the relevance of location and increased the importance of amenity resources. These changes have opened the door for increased employment in the service sector and "creative class" industries. Communities that have struggled economically and demographically for decades are now attempting to cope with explosive growth. The composition of the population in the rural West is changing and communities have become much more ethnically, racially, politically, and socially diverse. The obstacles faced and the opportunities available to rural communities are very different in the global society era than in previous eras. Communities cleaving to "business as usual" are likely to suffer from the pitfalls inherent in the new era, while failing to reap the potential benefits.

Natural resources on which communities once depended have decreased in importance from an economic development perspective. Changing cultural values and federal and state laws now create obstacles to the traditional uses of these resources. Many communities face ecological damage and resource shortages resulting from the manner in which resources were used in the past. On the other hand, the increased importance of amenity resources-factors that comprise an aesthetically pleasing environment such as climate, landscape, and proximity to recreation-impacts decisions about how such resources should be used. New ways of using resources, such as renewable energy, represent opportunities for many rural communities. Major conflicts over resource use abound, and appropriate and efficient means of dealing with these conflicts are imperative.

[Buy the book.](#)

[Contact the author.](#)

WRDC CONDUCTS REGIONAL WILDFIRE TRAINING SURVEY

Assessing the Interest and Needs of Community Wildfire Educational Training

The Western Rural Development Center has assembled a planning committee of Extension agents/faculty/specialists to explore the region's interest and needs for educational material and programs designed to help prepare communities before, during, and after a wildfire.



The planning committee has created an [Extension Educator Wildfire Training Needs Survey](#) and you are invited to complete the survey. The survey will take less than five minutes to complete and your responses will remain anonymous. Help us gauge the wildfire education training needs of the region and complete the survey today.

[Complete the Extension Educator Wildfire Training Needs Survey.](#)

WRDC-NACDEP WESTERN REGION WEBINAR

How Extension Educators Can Help Communities Prepare for Disasters

The Western Rural Development Center and NACDEP Western Region hosted its first webinar, "How Extension Educators Can Help Communities Prepare for Disasters," on May 1, 2014. Presented by Dr. Susan Kerr of the Northwestern Washington Research and Extension Center, and facilitated by Mark Apel (NACDEP Western Region Representative), the webinar highlighted some training resources available to Extension educators who want to engage in community disaster preparedness. The webinar was recorded so if you missed it, watch it today!



[Watch the webinar: How Extension Educators Can Help Communities Prepare for Disasters](#)

TWO WESTERN COMMUNITIES SELECTED FOR NATIONAL STUDY Community Assessment and Education to Promote Behavioral Health Planning and Evaluation (CAPE)



The joint Regional Rural Development Centers project, CAPE, selected ten pilot communities to participate in a community behavioral health benchmarking exercise. Two communities are in the West - Clark County, Nevada and Don Ana County, New Mexico. The Nevada team is led by Buddy Borden (University of Nevada, Reno), and the New Mexico team is led by Esther Devall (New Mexico State University). The pilot community teams are already busy reaching out to their respective communities and surveying current behavioral health programs.

The ten pilot communities are: **Nevada-Clark County; New Mexico-Dona Ana County;** Kansas-Finney County; Louisiana-Orleans Parrish; Maryland-Garret County; Tennessee-Blount County; Vermont-Chittenden County; Virginia-New River Valley; West Virginia-Kanawha County

[Meet the Community Leadership Teams.](#)
[Meet CAPE!](#)

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

Extension Agent Anaconda-Deer Lodge County Montana State University Extension

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Ongoing until filled

The primary focus of this position is to plan, implement, and evaluate programs and increase community leadership capacities with emphasis on increasing community, leadership, and economic capacities of the communities of Anaconda-Deer Lodge County, Montana.

The secondary focus for this position is consumer horticulture and related city beautification efforts. Additional responsibilities include leadership and support of the 4-H and family and consumer sciences program disciplines.

A complete description of the position, expectations, and compensation is available at <http://www.msu.extension.org/jobs/PAs/DeerLodgePA2014.pdf>

CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS, TRAININGS

NACDEP 2014 - The Art of Reinvention

National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals
22-25 June 2014
Grand Rapids, MI

[Details.](#)

Community Development Society 2014 Conference

20-23 July 2014
Dubuque, IA

[Details.](#)

Equity, Democracy, and the Commons: Counter-narratives for Rural Transformation

Rural Sociological Society Annual Meeting
30 July - 3 August 2014
New Orleans, LA

[Details.](#)

University Economic Development Association Annual Summit 2014

28 September - 1 October 2014
Santa Fe, NM

[Details.](#)

California Naturalist State-Wide Conference

17-19 October 2014
Pacific Grove, CA

[Details.](#)



EXTENSION'S ROLE IN SUSTAINABILITY

In this issue of *Rural Connections* Western Extension Agents, Faculty, and Specialists examine the 100-year history of Cooperative Extension and its unique position to effect nationwide change as it pertains to sustainability outreach and education.

Read *Rural Connections*.



STAY CONNECTED



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