

# Utah Rural Development Roundtable



## Summary of Utah Rural Development Roundtable

Richfield, Utah

June 24, 2009

### Those in Attendance:

Don Albrecht – Western Rural Development Center  
Scott Boyer – Utah State University Extension  
Kim Christy – Utah Trust Lands Administration (SITLA)  
Lis Cohen – State of Utah Governor's Office  
Beverly Evans – State of Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development  
Don Falvey – Panoramaland RC&D Council  
Chuck Gay – Utah State University Extension  
Sylvia Gillen – USDA-NRCS  
Linda Clark Gilmore – Millard County Economic Development  
Peggy Harrison – Utah Rural Telecom Association  
Roger Koon – USDA Rural Development  
Wilson Martin – Utah State Historic Preservation Organization (SHPO)  
Gil Miller – Economic Associates of Utah, Inc.  
Elaine Packer – Brigham City, Utah  
Jeff Packer – Governor's Rural Partnership Board  
Les Prall – State of Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development  
Allen Rowley – USDA, Fishlake National Forest

### Session One: What do we value about the rural areas of Utah?

Participants were asked to list their two-three most important positive features about Utah's rural areas. Their responses were:

1. People with positive core values and independent character. There is a strong work and stewardship ethic with an emotional connection to the land (both private and public), community cohesion and a sense that Utah's rural communities are a safe place for families.
2. Livable communities with functional and managed open spaces, lack of congestion, clean air and water and unrestricted vistas.

3. Extensive natural resource base for economic development, including agriculture, land, water, minerals, coal, oil and gas, ecosystem services and opportunities for renewable energy.
4. Diverse recreation opportunities such as camping, fishing, hunting, skiing, ATV, hiking, biking and visiting historical sites. Extensive scenic beauty, natural, cultural, recreational and historic resources sites managed by federal and state entities.

### **Session Two: Priorities for Strengthening the Future of Rural Areas**

Participants were asked: As you ponder the future of your state’s rural areas, which of the following general rural development topics would you (personally) identify as being of highest priority to promoting the long-term survival and strength of these areas? That is, what **THREE** broad areas listed below would you select as being of “highest priority” for the future of rural counties and communities in your state?

- Economic Development
- Economic/Social Inequality and Poverty
- Education and Workforce Development
- Health and Nutrition
- Housing
- Information and Communication Technologies
- Leadership, Citizen Participation and Rural Public Policy
- Population Change/Migration Patterns
- Public Land Use and Management
- Public Services/Public Infrastructure
- Renewable Energy Development
- Rural and Entrepreneurial Development
- Rural-Urban Interface and Growth Management
- Water, Biodiversity and other Natural Resources
- Other areas not listed above (please list):

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Then the group narrowed down the individual responses into the following three priorities:

1. Leadership. Train, develop and mentor the next generation of leaders utilizing technology and social networking that they can relate to and that readily appeals to this demographic. This may include hosting and/or promoting trainings and opportunities on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, etc.
2. Encourage diverse rural and entrepreneurial development through business development and retention. Business developments in renewable energy are especially significant, including biomass, producing energy crops, wind and solar, exploring carbon credits. The establishment, expansion and use of Business Resource Centers are recommended.
3. Public service and public infrastructure including water, sewer, telecommunication, gas, electric, roads, etc. There is a need for circuit riders to help with planning and grants writing.

### **Session Three: Digging Deeper into the Three Priority Areas**

Next participants were asked to take these three priority areas they identified during Session Two and identify challenges and strategies/initiatives that could be launched to address the challenges. Their responses were:

1. Leadership. Train, develop and mentor the next generation of leaders utilizing technology and social networking that they can relate to and that readily appeals to them.
  - a. Specific challenges faced by rural areas of Utah
    - i. There is a lack of leadership and without effective leadership, nothing happens.
    - ii. There is concern with the aging of the current leadership structure.
    - iii. There is a fear that newcomers will take things in a direction that is uncomfortable.
    - iv. The world is rapidly changing, and there is a need for leaders to prepare their communities for this changing world.
  - b. Strategies/initiatives the should be launched
    - i. Develop programs for young people, and make involvement fun.
    - ii. Partner with 4H, Boys and Girls Clubs, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, science classes, and other youth organizations.
    - iii. Create opportunities for existing community leaders to have the opportunity to be mentored by state, federal and business executives.
    - iv. Support scholarships for people who show leadership potential and provide leadership academies.
    - v. Use train-the-trainer programs to teach leadership skills.
    - vi. Encourage communities to have a youth city council.
    - vii. Identify real problems and allow young people to be involved in the process and receive recognition for their contributions.
    - viii. Develop critical thinking skills.
    - ix. Educate older people of the importance of mentoring and getting the young involved.
2. Encourage diverse rural and entrepreneurial development through business development and retention. Business developments in renewable energy are especially significant, including biomass, producing energy crops, wind and solar, exploring carbon credits. The establishment, expansion and use of Business Resource Centers are recommended.
  - a. Specific challenges faced by rural areas of Utah
    - i. If you want to live in a rural community, you need to create or bring a good job with you.
    - ii. There is a need for letting communities recognize the value of flexibility in neighborhoods as part of the planning and zoning process.
    - iii. There is a lack of knowledge and skills in how to establish successful small businesses.

- iv. We are not cultivating creativity and ingenuity, and the ability to take an idea to fruition.
- b. Strategies/initiatives that should be launched
    - i. Engage youth in entrepreneurial development programs such as junior achievement. Such programs do not often exist in rural areas.
    - ii. Implement programs available through SBA.
    - iii. Utilize the skills of retirees, especially new people moving into the community. Implement Senior Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)
    - iv. Help implement BOSS (Business Outreach Support Services).  
[www.extension.usu.edu/boss](http://www.extension.usu.edu/boss)
    - v. Find a way to give kids unstructured time to foster creativity.
    - vi. Look at ideas that failed in the past but that could be successful with new technology.
    - vii. Facilitate listening sessions on entrepreneurial development.
    - viii. Help people understand how new business development is not competition but benefits everyone.
3. Public service and public infrastructure including water, sewer, telecommunication, gas, electric, roads, etc. There is a need for circuit riders to help with planning and grants writing.
- a. Specific challenges faced by rural areas of Utah
    - i. The dastardly double D's – a lot of distance and low density, which means high average costs, and the lack of infrastructure inhibits development.
    - ii. Rural communities lack access to capital and expertise.
    - iii. There are significant problems with permitting, regulatory boundaries and rights of way.
  - b. Strategies/initiatives that should be launched
    - i. Share the burden of infrastructure development so that rural residents can benefit. Implement Rural Economic Infrastructure Funding (REIF).
    - ii. Be active in the Utah Renewable Energy Zones report.
    - iii. Encourage development of off-the-grid businesses, households and communities by helping people become aware of effective strategies.

#### **Session Four: Research and Extension Needs and Potential Partners**

Finally, participants were asked to identify what they felt are the most critical roles that should be played by your state's land-grant universities in relation to the THREE priority areas identified in Session Two and discussed in Session Three. Their responses were:

- 1. Research Needs
  - a. Explore which approaches are most effective in overcoming the problems of distance and low density in providing infrastructure to rural areas.
  - b. Explore which programs are most effective in developing leadership and entrepreneurial skills.
- 2. Extension/Outreach Needs
  - a. Develop and implement leadership development programs.

- b. Develop and implement entrepreneurial development programs.
- 3. Potential Partners
  - a. Jason Berry – State Energy Program – Department of Natural Resources
  - b. Utah Department of Agriculture and Food
  - c. DEQ
  - d. Public Utilities
  - e. Utah Clean Energy (nonprofit)
  - f. Governor’s Rural Partnership Board
  - g. Youth Groups
  - h. GOED (Governor’s Office of Economic Development)
  - i. USU Extension
  - j. Federal agencies (Forest Service, BLM, Rural Development, NRCS, etc.)
  - k. Utah Trust Lands Administration (SITLA)
  - l. RC&D Council
  - m. Utah Rural Telecom Association
  - n. Utah State Historic Preservation Organization (SHPO)
  - o. Economic Associates of Utah, Inc.