

# A Message

from the NACDEP President and Conference Co-Chair



We are honored to share with you articles written by seventeen of the more than 90 presenters from the 2009 San Diego NACDEP Conference. The authors and presenters represent Extension educators and specialists from across the country and USDA professionals.

NACDEP, National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals, is an association of Extension experts working on community and economic development from land-grant universities across the United States. We are dedicated to improving the visibility, coordination, professional status, and resource base of community and economic development Extension programs and professionals.

We promote the importance of community and economic development through education, training, advocacy, and coordination within the land grant system. To learn more about NACDEP we invite you to visit the website <http://www.nacdep.net>.

This year's NACDEP Conference theme is "Creating Sustainable Communities in a Changing America." The planning committee chose the Three Es of Sustainability for the conference tracks while adding two Es, Engagement and Evaluation, to incorporate the diverse body of work conducted by Extension professionals.

The conference tracks are:

**Sustainable Economy:** Sessions in this track will address a wide variety of topics ranging from strategies to diversity economics to specific tactics such as entrepreneurship, business retention and expansion, Main Street and farm and ranch programs, tourism, as well as other business and economic development strategies.

**Sustainable Environment:** Sessions in this track will address issues including land use, water resources, nature-based recreation and stewardship of natural resources.

**Sustainable Social Equity:** Sessions in this track will include topics such as environmental justice, diversity, affordable housing, health care, safety and increasing participation of underrepresented groups.

**Engagement:** Sessions in this track will include topics such as leadership, civic engagement, volunteerism, social capital and deliberative democracy.

**Evaluation:** Sessions in this track will include topics such as measuring impact and providing accountability.

The articles in this issue of *Rural Connections* represent each of the five conference tracks and showcase the innovative programs being researched and implemented throughout the U.S. to benefit our nation's communities.

Sincerely,

Ed Jones  
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2009 NACDEP President  
NACDEP Conference Co-chair

Jim Goodwin  
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NACDEP Conference Co-chair