

Healthy communities have a convergence of positive forces: health care services, housing, leadership, infrastructure, communications, jobs.....collaboration is a must.

Rural Development in Kansas—
A Confluence of Factors Caused Change

- Kansas, Inc., strategic planning document of 2007
- Kansas Communities LLC—helping towns plan
- Governor's Rural Development Initiative
- Offices of Rural Opportunity
- Kansas Farm Bureau involvement with HTP towns

Enhancing the Structure of
Rural Development in Kansas

Four Pillars:

- Capital;
- Access;
- Leadership; and
- Benchmarking

From the statewide strategic planning process of Kansas, Inc.

State Rural Development Division

- Provide a central point of access
- Understanding and inventory of assets
- Convene and coordinate efforts
- Measure needs and efforts
- Ensure follow-up and follow-through

Governor's RD Initiative

2007 Budget Initiative funds for:

- Creation of an Office of Rural Opportunity
- Community Capacity Building Grants
- Small Community Improvement Program
- Dollars for entrepreneurship and small business

Offices of Rural Opportunity

- Four cover the state
- Based in rural areas
- Focus on towns 5,000 and below
- Gather data on connections made and needs unmet



Office of Rural Opportunity representative Renee Lippencott works with members of the historical society in Morris County, Kansas.

Needs Met and Unmet

Data gathered over the last year by regional offices tell us several things.

- Communities benefit from the connection.
- Housing, infrastructure and health care are top three concerns across the state.
- Modern communication—high speed internet—is basic, vital infrastructure.

Partnering

It's simple but it's true...it helps to talk to each other. So we meet regularly by phone and face to face with academic, state, private and federal partners. That includes USDA RD, SBDC, KU and KSU, other agencies, Kansas Farm Bureau, community foundations and others.

Community Capacity Building

We can encourage communities to work together to build roadmaps to success but only they can really do that. Several other entities are working hard to help our communities build capacity to help themselves through community capacity building.

Hometown Prosperity

Kansas Farm Bureau understands the connection between agriculture and rural communities. Their HTP initiative was created to ensure vibrant communities for the future with the necessities and amenities that make for a good life. KFB has been creative and proactive in this effort.

Sedan– A HTP Community



Principles of HTP

- Youth retention
- Entrepreneurship
- Wealth retention
- Leadership

Current communities are Atwood, NW Kansas; Onaga, NE Kansas; and Sedan in the southeast.

Public Square Process-- Kansas Communities

Greensburg was all but destroyed by a May 2007 tornado. This process helped unite the community to create a shared vision for rebuilding. The result is a Green Community rising from the prairie. Greensburg has enlarged its vision to include two neighboring towns and is exploring county unification.

Public Square Process



Another Example

Greeley County has also used the process. Through community conversations begun under the Public Square process, the community itself decided to consolidate government to improve efficiency of tax-funded services....and 73 percent of the voters agreed.

Other Capacity Building Endeavors

Kansas Communities and HTP are notable efforts. Other such efforts are out there quietly doing good work—the Kansas PRIDE program, the Main Street program, Kansas Health Foundation, Kansas Leadership Foundation, Center for Community Support and others.

The Public Square

- Business, Government, Schools and Health providers form the Public Square.

“If we invest in leadership development, strategic planning and communications then we probably don’t need new programs and grants because the current programs and grants will be used more effectively and efficiently.”—Former Governor Kathleen Sebelius

Partnerships Again

The Kansas Legislature created the Rural Policy Commission, an independent body that will focus on rural issues and, we hope, serve as a “think tank” to help us remain aware of issues at the grass roots. Health care is represented on this commission.

In Conclusion

Collaboration will be key to our common goal—Building Healthy 21st Century Rural Communities. We must collaborate to use the resources we have--including ARRA funds--to the maximum benefit.



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