

# Extension Makes a Difference

## 2017



# North Central Extension Community Development Programs Full Report

State Extension leaders from the twelve North Central 1862 Land-Grant universities developed common indicators for reporting the impacts of community and economic development educational programs. The states collectively developed this report based on in-state action. Each partner university selected a subset of the indicators for reporting. The following table presents the most commonly used indicators. Thus, the impacts of our educational programs reported here, while impressive, are conservative estimates.

## More than \$202 Million of impacts and 14,344 jobs created or saved

States reported value of volunteer hours, as well as dollar efficiencies and savings, bringing the total impact to \$202M. Our impacts stem from innovative, science-based approaches developed in partnership with our stakeholders. The programming associated with these impacts varies according to community needs and the creativity of university-based and other partners. To provide an idea of the types of programming used to generate our impacts, we provide several examples.

## Businesses and Jobs



**685**  
Business plans developed  
8 states reporting

**746**  
Businesses created  
8 states reporting




**6153**  
Jobs created  
10 states reporting

**11,916**  
Jobs retained  
7 states reporting

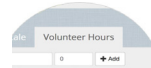


## Dollar Values

**\$397,995**  
Volunteer hours leveraged to deliver programs  
7 states reporting




**\$1,958,874**  
Organization and/or community-generated volunteer hours  
9 states reporting



**\$2,612,183**  
Efficiencies and savings  
3 states reporting



**\$14,578,428**  
Grants and resources leveraged/generated by communities  
11 states reporting



**\$182,082,700**  
Resources leveraged by businesses  
8 states reporting




## Participation


**2,474**  
New leadership roles & opportunities undertaken  
11 states reporting



**1,192**  
Community or organizational, plans/policies adopted/implemented  
10 states reporting



**718**  
Community or organizational, plans/policies adopted/implemented  
10 states reporting



**120,153**  
Volunteer hours for community generated work  
10 states reporting



States reported value of volunteer hours, as well as dollar efficiencies and savings, bringing the total impact to \$122M. Full details broken down by state, are available at: [http://ncrcrd.msu.edu/ncrcrd/state\\_extension\\_leader\\_section1](http://ncrcrd.msu.edu/ncrcrd/state_extension_leader_section1). Our impacts stem from innovative, sciencebased approaches developed in partnership with our stakeholders. The programming associated with these impacts varies according to community needs and the creativity of university-based and other partners. To provide an idea of the types of programming used to generate our impacts, we provide several examples.

## Extension programs that make a difference



### [Mercer County Better Together](#)

The community planning process for Mercer County, Illinois began in 2015, and in the past year, guided by University of Illinois Extension, focused on civic engagement and organizational development. Throughout the county, Extension worked with community organizations to host 11 community forums, with nearly 800 county residents attending. Each community in the county was represented on the project steering committee. According to the project coordinator, “For likely the first time in the history of Mercer County, all 11 population centers are present at the same table to communicate and gain the mutual understanding necessary for future collaboration.” The organization and the effort are labeled Mercer County Better Together (MCBT). Community volunteers helped facilitate meetings, raise funds, promote the process, analyze data, and collect stories from residents about their history in Mercer County. They also connected with residents through online surveys, a Facebook page, and a new website.

Extension Educator Russell Medley supervised the work of Francesca Sallinger, graduate student in Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Illinois, who developed a variety of materials, including county and community demographic summaries, economic information fact sheets, and business and consumer expenditure data -- all of which help to contextualize potential emerging projects. In addition to preparing marketing and organizational templates and materials for MCBT, Sallinger facilitated discussion and community input at forums and meetings. The steering committee examined data and generated statements on each community, as well as Mercer County as a whole. These statements, which reflect the values, hopes, concerns and ideas of residents of each place, are critical as the group determines how and where MCBT will leverage funding for projects. Sallinger developed case studies of similar rural Illinois communities, providing insight into how other areas have leveraged assets and priorities into community and economic development initiatives.

To ensure that MCBT could serve as the lead organization to implement plans, University of Illinois Extension helped establish an organizational structure for MCBT that included 501 c(3) certification, the development of bylaws, the establishment of a board of directors, and a plan for a continuing funding mechanism for the organization. MCBT continues to create a culture of informed collaboration across Mercer County. All 11 county population centers are currently represented, working toward establishing a countywide community in pursuit of vitality and sustainability through community and economic development. Mercer County is on track to confirm a countywide strategic plan that will include input and actionable strategies, a result of Mercer County residents working collaboratively. Mercer County is better together!

[Francesca Sallinger's case studies, capstone report and poster](#)



### [Stronger Economies Together \(SET\)](#)

The SET program allows engagement and collaboration with business leaders and regional planners on growth strategies in target sectors to drive economic growth. Nationally, the Purdue Center for Regional Development (PCRD) has become the primary provider of the information needed by SET regions to assess, analyze and delineate the major industry clusters that have been (or will be) incorporated into their respective regional economic development blueprints. At the state level, the Purdue Extension Community Development Program continues to foster a strong collaboration with Indiana's USDA-Rural Development office and their partnership has benefited four regions that cover 22 Indiana counties.

SET is in its seventh and final phase. PCRD continues to play a key role at the national level, especially in terms of data analysis and regional backstopping. Purdue Extension/USDA-RD are currently working with the Southern Indiana Development Commission (SIDC).



Since 2015, 4 regional planning councils were trained and coached for more than 100 hours on developing and implementing regional economic plans. As a result, 3 certified High-Quality Plans (HQP) have been completed and the fourth region, Southern Indiana Development Corporation, is working on the completion of its plan. Collectively, these regions have used their High Quality Plans to attract more than \$5.56 million in funding to support a variety of activities in support of their HQPs. Moreover, these plans are serving as the foundation for their Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) plan being submitted to the Economic Development Administration.

## Hometown Collaboration Initiative

Nearly 700 Indiana communities have populations of 25,000 or less. Many are struggling to survive, especially those located some distance away from the state's metropolitan areas. Members of the community often desire to pursue a goal or vision, yet struggle to effectively work together to accomplish the outcome. Likewise, it is common for a few individuals to be the driving force behind changes within a community, thus hindering an opportunity for inclusive community-wide buy-in for a big idea.

Hometown Collaboration Initiative (HCI) is an initiative of the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) in partnership with Purdue Extension Community Development, the Purdue Center for Regional Development, and the Indiana Communities Institute of Ball State University. HCI was founded on three core values: (1) Promoting collaboration among local stakeholders; (2) Ensuring inclusion of diverse sectors and demographic groups; and (3) Advancing and fostering community buy-in. HCI is an 18-month program to help hometowns take control of their destiny by re-energizing the civic spirit and tackling key issues that are essential to their long-term survival. Each HCI team takes steps to recruit and engage a diverse mix of local people who are willing to explore new ways to strengthen their community and take an active role in launching all phases of HCI. Initiative participants carefully study and analyze data, existing community plans and the viewpoints of local residents. In fact, 2,305 individuals from communities completed the HCI survey assessing local needs in 2017 alone. In addition, a total of 247 community forum participants were involved in the process in 2017.

Throughout 2017, 13 Indiana communities have been actively planning, and logged over 2,545 volunteer hours with an Independent Sector value of nearly \$61,400. Communities progress at their own pace as they address their community plan. Each project is unique to the community assets, input, and goals. Community efforts can be found here: <http://www.indianahci.org/communities/index.php>. One example of an HCI community is Rush County. Members of the Rush County HCI group built <http://www.rushcountybiz.com/> website which gives current and budding business owners the tools to develop business plans, obtain loans or funding, network with peers, and expand operations. This website includes an inventory they coordinated and compiled with 63 small businesses /agencies that service entrepreneurs and small business. Rush County is supporting entrepreneurs to open new businesses in the community, including youth. Each year Rush County nominates a high school student for the Purdue Entrepreneurship Academy led by Indiana 4-H, a three-day training on Purdue University campus. Rush County is making tools and resources available to these students and other entrepreneurs in the community to support them in launching successful new small businesses.

## Beginner's Guide to Grant Writing



Many people working in nonprofits and local governments find themselves in positions in which they need or want to write grants but have little or no training to do so. Writers who understand the grant writing process and can communicate their ideas clearly to potential funders, can leverage funding to improve the quality of life in Indiana communities.

A new and improved version of Purdue Extension's Beginner's Guide to Grant Writing was first piloted in five communities in the fall 2016, and then offered at another eight workshops in spring 2017 across the state of Indiana. A total of 210 participants attended the first year (2016), and programs are on track for almost 300 attendees in 2017. The workshop is two full days of instruction and activities, and geared toward novice grant writers with an idea or a program in mind that will help their community. Participants include staff and volunteers from local governments, nonprofits and educational organizations as well as members of community groups, clubs and concerned citizens who see a need in their communities that they want to help address.

Respondents from the Pilot Fall 2016 cohort's 6- and 12- month follow-up surveys, plus the Spring 2017 cohort's 6-month surveys (20% response rate) show: (1) Participants submitted 46 proposals after attending the workshop; (2) 27 proposals received funding; and (3) A combined total of \$900,000 in grant funding has been awarded to attendees since attending the workshop. As a result of the workshop, volunteer actions and investments are as follows: (1) 13 participants undertook grant writing as a volunteer; (2) 351 volunteer hours were reported, a total value of \$8,206 using the Independent Sector value for Indiana of \$23.38 per hours; and (3) Ten participants took on new leadership roles. For the communities and businesses, the survey found that: (1) Five organizations engaged in strategic planning; (2) 35 partnerships were formed; and (3) Three jobs were created.

The Beginner's Guide to Grant Writing program continues to garner interest across the state of Indiana. Anecdotally, this program is showing strong signs of helping to deepen connections and building positive relationships among Extension and local governments, nonprofits, and community foundations that can lead to future collaboration and outreach for communities across Indiana.



### **Service to Local Governments**

The Data Indicators Portal, a VPEO initiative provides web-based information products such as local retail trade analysis and demographic and economic indicators. Associate professor and extension landscape architect Christopher Seeger and GIS support specialist Bailey Hanson continue to update the Data for Decision Makers downloadable report. Users are able to access 2016 population estimates by county and city, as well as data on the median age by sex, the ratio of males for every 100 females, and total population by sex. CED staff conducted workshops throughout the state on using the website. In FY2017, the Indicators Portal had 17,117 page-views and 3,505 sessions by 1,741 users.

As part of CED's Iowa Government Finance Initiative (IGFI), CED released city level annual fiscal conditions reports for all 945 cities in Iowa. In addition to including the up-to-date fiscal data for all the cities in Iowa for the year 2016, the reports also include the recently released US Census data on select socioeconomic characteristics at the city level. The reports are the only source in the state of Iowa for cities wishing to access the most updated socioeconomic and fiscal information in a format customized with a narrative for every city in the state. In FY 2017, 135 county IGFI reports and 677 city IGFI reports were downloaded. In addition to the annual reports, IGFI provided local governments an alternate perspective about their financial health and performance and provided training targeted at elected officials and public employees. Using local government finance data, IGFI analyzes trends and financial performance of selected indicators. CED specialist Cindy Kendall trained local government leaders on the initiative.

The Geospatial Technology Training Program conducted four ArcGIS two-day short courses for a total of 48 planners and local officials from throughout the state.

CD-DIAL (Community Development—Data, Information, and Analysis Laboratory) works with communities and organizations to build decision-making capacity as they collect and use information about their local populations. CD-DIAL conducted surveys for the city of Ames (4 surveys), and 2 county surveys on Access to Essential Services for Wapello, Cass, Cerro Gordo and O'Brien counties.

FY 2017, the Office of State and Local Government Programs trained 1,777 government officials. At the 2016 Municipal Professionals Institute and Academy, 278 city clerks, administrators, and finance officers received instruction on a variety of topics related to local government.

Introduction to Planning and Zoning for Local Officials is a three-hour workshop designed to introduce the basic principles of land use planning and development management to elected officials, planning and zoning officials, and board of adjustment members without formal training in the subjects. Using case scenarios in a highly interactive format, the workshop highlights issues frequently faced in the land use process. In 2017, 261 planning officials attended workshops held in seven locations throughout the state.

CED specialists Lynn and Steve Adams provided strategic planning assistance to the seven-county CROSS (County Rural Offices of Social Services) in south-central Iowa. The region, like others in Iowa, was required to create a community services plan to address the area's needs, using existing funding as well as one-time funding of \$3.4 million per region.

### **Hospitality Customer Service Training**

This program was delivered through three contracts with the Western Iowa Tourism Region, the Central Iowa Tourism Region and the Eastern Iowa Tourism Association through funds provided by the Iowa Economic Development Authority. These are two-hour, interactive classes. The first half of the class focuses on community-level tourism as a form of economic development. The second half of the class focuses on skills in customer service such as complaint resolution, dealing with negative online reviews, and providing exceptional customer service. Each of the 38 participating cities were surveyed prior to their training session in order to customize the training to each community's local tourism issues and assets. The total number of business leaders and entrepreneurs who participated is 1,276.

### **Central Avenue Corridor Project**

During spring 2016, CED assembled a team of ISUEO colleagues to begin a three-phase community engagement and development process along the Central Avenue Corridor in Dubuque. The City of Dubuque is interested in revitalizing the Central Avenue Corridor and recognizes that the businesses and residents have a number of concerns about the area. The three phases involve fact-finding civic engagement fieldwork, design and development at the individual business level, and at the business district/corridor level.

#### **Research and Education**

The ISUEO Central Avenue Corridor (CAC) team was awarded \$15,053 to begin a fact-finding community engagement

process along the corridor, which included developing a detailed inventory of businesses, service organizations, and residences along the corridor and its surrounding area.

### Economic Development

CAC team members connected corridor business with SCORE for business assistance.

### Community Planning and Design

The City of Dubuque awarded an additional \$5,500 to the project to bring a design studio to the corridor for the purpose of engaging the local community in long-term creative public design process for corridor redevelopment. In addition, Lisa Bates and Jennifer Drinkwater, studio instructors, were awarded a \$1,550 planning grant as well as \$5,000 for direct studio support from the College of Design Fieldstead Company Endowment Outreach Studio Funds. Funds were used to cover costs of bringing students to Dubuque to work with Central Avenue corridor community members.

### Shop Healthy Iowa Initiative

CED, Iowa Department of Public Health, and University of Iowa College of Public Health continue their collaboration on the Shop Healthy Iowa program. Store owners receive technical training in produce handling, assistance in redesigning store space to promote healthy eating choices to customers, and promotional materials. Sales of fresh produce have high gross profit margins for stores, magnified when the volume of sales increases. However, the risk in offering more fresh produce for sale lies in the greater energy and time investments required to realize those profits and the potential for increased inventory to perish before sales increase. Participation in the Shop Healthy Iowa program is designed to provide store owners with the needed assistance to increase sales of fresh produce. The program was piloted in Perry, West Liberty and Muscatine in 2015 and is currently being implemented in Ottumwa and Marshalltown. In 2017 the program was conducted in Davenport and Sioux City.



### Community Food Systems

The [Community Design Lab](#) (CDL) is a partnership between the ISU College of Design and ISU Extension and Outreach that focuses on long-term, issue-driven design research with the goal of developing models that focus on sustainable development at various scales (building, neighborhood, city, region, etc.). In FY 2017, CDL partnered with the ANR Extension and expanded the work of the Agricultural Urbanism Toolkit, renaming it Community Food Systems. The Community Food Systems program promotes public interest through engagement with community leaders, leading to a holistic design incorporating community values around food. The program uses agricultural urbanism tactics to promote local food system revitalization in communities. The toolkit has the potential to improve food security, create resilient communities, promote social equity, increase environmental diversity, and build financial sustainability for individuals and communities.

## K-STATE

Research and Extension

### Progressive Community Vitality Processes

Kansas communities struggle to remain vital, K-State Research and Extension has created a strategic approach to help communities help themselves to preserve, create, and improve their future. These programs include:

- **First Impressions** (community needs assessment)-The First Impressions program shows a community the good things happening in town and opportunities for improvement as seen through the eyes of first-time visitors. This insight brings the community together to focus on improvement projects and highlights popular events and amenities.
  - More than 65 Kansas communities identified signage, walkable communities, repurposing buildings, park improvements, and local grocery store projects.
  - Belleville, Kansas identified four major areas of focus to address. Committees were developed to work on beautification, health and wellness, signage, and a web presence.
  - Clay Center, Kansas did a downtown assessment with Kansas State University. The community formed Clay Center Action Now (C-CAN) to move forward with some of the ideas. With Extension's involvement, First Impressions was completed to provide more than just a downtown perspective. They now have a much broader focus for implementation.
- **Kansas PRIDE** (community improvement and empowerment)-This program provides support to local efforts by providing technical support, resource education, and opportunities through the partners; K-State Research and Extension, the Kansas Department of Commerce, the Kansas Masons, and Kansas PRIDE< Inc..
  - 79 PRIDE communities implemented 761 projects to address identified needs, donated 57,895 hours of volunteerism, and raised more than \$773,862 dollars for reinvestments in their communities.



- After Belleville, Kansas completed the First Impressions Program, they recognized a need for a group to lead the community forward. Community PRIDFE formed for that purpose and just in time to solve a serious issue: with the departure of the Chamber and Mainstreet Director, the annual Ag Fest was going to be dropped. With just a little over three weeks to make it happen, the PRIDE committee planned a successful and well-attended event.
- **Board Leadership and Grant Writing** (community capacity building)-Vibrant communities need community boards with members who have the tools and knowledge to run their respective boards effectively and generate resources to support their mission.
  - 120 participants at 15 sites participated in leadership training, 98 percent of the participants felt better prepared to serve as a more effective community leader.
  - Before the training, 24 percent of the participants did not feel prepared to serve as an effective board member. After the training, 98 percent felt prepared to serve as an effective board member.
  - Before the training on fourth of participants did not think they could help their organization move forward with a strategic planning process. Following the training, 100 percent agreed they could help move the process forward!
  - 95 percent of participants in grant-writing workshops report they were more confident in writing grants. 97% discovered new sources of data and 67% developed new search methods to finding grants.
- **Ripple Effects Mapping** (collective impact measurement)-This process is a new method to document collective community impact in our communities that helps to visualize the effect of community vitality programs on the local community/region.
  - This is being used in partnership with a large private foundation, The Dane G. Hansen Foundation, in northwest Kansas to better understand the ripple effects and relationships of the grants they have issued on individuals, groups and communities in each county. It helps to document the collective impact their dollars are having in these communities.
  - Mankato, Kansas used this to document the impact of a performing arts stage in the city park on the broader community. It includes of the “unintended” benefits as well as those that were “planned”! See example below:



## MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

### Government and Public Policy

When the state of Michigan created policy changes and new enabling legislation allowing communities to more proactively enact fiscal sustainability and local planning initiatives to enhance their community, MSU Extension’s Government and Public Policy work team developed and delivered more than 130 separate educational workshops. Nearly 3000 local government officials representing municipalities in 77 of Michigan’s 83 counties attended the workshops that were delivered within six months of the legislative changes.

## UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

### Raising Shrimp in Minnesota?

A Minnesota company proposed the development of large-scale shrimp aquaculture in Southwest Minnesota, and communities wanted to understand the potential economic impact it could have. To address this need, the University of Minnesota Extension Center for Community Vitality, with funding from the EDA Center at the University of Minnesota Crookston and the Southwest Initiative Foundation, measured the potential economic impact of a shrimp harbor in the region.

The Economic Impact Analysis project identified both short term impacts from harbor construction as well as longer-term impacts. The study found that during the construction phase, a new shrimp harbor would generate an estimated \$48.3 million in economic activity in the five-county region. The ultimate operation of a shrimp harbor would generate an estimated \$23.7 million in economic activity across all industries. This includes \$5.6 million in income to residents of the region and employment for 124 people.

Several months after completion of the study, Extension evaluation staff conducted key informant interviews with economic

development professionals in the region. These informants reported learning that the economic impact was greater than expected in terms of revenue to communities and jobs created in affiliate industries, such as soybeans and construction.

The study provided influential evidence that convinced the Minnesota Legislature to approve production incentives and pass legislation using agriculture refunds to help the aquaculture industry. The city of Luverne decided to give 60 acres of land to this project, valued at \$382,560. Furthermore, two companies in the region have begun design and manufacture of machinery needed for shrimp processing.

## Informing decision-making about a Local Option Sales Tax

**Local Option Sales Tax Analysis**  
Greater MN counties consider resources for transportation projects

Merritt Bussiere and Ryan Pesch, Center for Community Vitality

**Presenting the Issue**  
Counties in Greater Minnesota face serious challenges maintaining and improving their transportation infrastructure and programs.

- Many rural Minnesota counties have delayed routine road maintenance and other related work.
- Public funding for local and county transportation initiatives has dwindled in recent decades as county program and project costs have risen.

In 2013, the State of Minnesota enacted a law enabling Greater Minnesota counties to adopt a Local Option Sales Tax of up to ½ percent specifically addressing transportation challenges.

**Why Extension?**

- **Neutral Party:** Our credibility depends on our commitment to providing "conservative," reliable estimates and remaining explicitly neutral in the wake of each study, leaving any sales tax decision to elected leaders.
- **Reputation:** Community Economics has conducted over 250 Retail Trade Analysis projects since 2004 in a wide mix of communities. We know both the data and the context.
- **Relationship:** Community Vitality staff frequently serve as a resource for local and county governments so officials trust our work.

**Behavior or Action Outcomes**  
An intended outcome of Community Economics programs is that local officials make more informed economic development policy decisions. As shown in the map below, three communities that have

Local option sales tax can be used for transportation projects such as local bike trails.

Public funding for local and county transportation initiatives has dwindled in recent decades as county program and project costs have risen. Many rural Minnesota counties have delayed routine road maintenance and other related work as a result.

In 2013, the State of Minnesota enacted a law allowing Greater Minnesota counties to adopt a Local Option Sales Tax of up to ½ percent specifically addressing transportation challenges.

Local elected officials wanted to understand how much funding such a tax could raise, how much of the tax proceeds might be generated by local, permanent residents vs. visitors, travelers and seasonal residents, and if the new tax would affect local business sales. So the Extension Community Economics Retail Analysis and Development team created a new

applied research offering. Using Minnesota sales and use tax data, they created a customized data analysis for counties or municipalities interested in learning about the potential economic benefit of the tax.

Three Minnesota counties that participated in the Local Options Sales Tax Analysis relied upon this analysis to inform their decision about passing the sales tax. Since receiving the Extension reports, two of these counties passed the sales tax option and generated a total of \$5 million in sales tax proceeds for transportation projects. The third county is still deliberating the tax hike.

Fall 2017 interviews with project stakeholders provided insights into the usefulness of the research and Extension's role in providing it. A County Commissioner noted: "I found [the research] to be extremely valuable. Without Extension's analysis I would have had to say "I think," not "I know," which isn't the best answer." A County Engineer noted that "[We] really needed the credibility of a third party source. Another County Commissioner said that "[The research was] one of the few places we thought we could get data that was accurate and based on science."

## Strengthening civic engagement to promote water quality

University of Minnesota Extension has worked with Minnesota residents to address water quality concerns, such as wastewater and stormwater management, agricultural runoff, and aquatic invasive species. This work has primarily focused on technical solutions. In 2011, leadership and civic engagement educators for Extension's Center for Community Vitality began to collaborate with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to help local water quality professionals and volunteers better work with the public on more authentic civic engagement efforts. This effort allowed Extension to test a five-stage Civic Engagement Model recently developed by its leadership and civic engagement team. As a result, water quality civic engagement cohorts formed in several areas of the state.

Each cohort aimed to accomplish the following:

1. Build networks for working on water quality within participants' respective region(s),
2. Enhance the capacity of water quality professionals to engage with stakeholders and the public to address water protection and restoration, and
3. Facilitate co-learning among participants on the issue of water quality.

While a variety of evaluation methods are used to measure the effectiveness of the program, Ripple Effects Mapping (REM) has been particularly helpful. A recent REM process conducted with the Mississippi-Brainerd-Sartell water quality cohort in central Minnesota highlighted the many ways that participants were using their increased skills and connections to strengthen water quality efforts. Major themes emerging from the REM session were that the program:

1. Strengthened co-learning among participants, enabling them to build on each other's work;
2. Enhanced relations within and among watershed organizations;
3. Built personal and group leadership strengths;
4. Enabled participants to apply new civic engagement skills to improve water quality.

One participant noted "I use the community readiness exercise to assess if the Public Water Suppliers I work with are at point



where they will be able to successfully implement a Source Water Implementation Grant. If they are not ready I don't want to push them into applying because the grant implementation may not be successful." Another commented that there were many civic engagement tools they continue to use: "Using the stakeholder tools in my job is very important. Mapping out who the players are, what role they play, and how entwined in the process they are and where they stand on issues really helps me to map out a course of action to get the best result, which isn't always the result I'm looking for."

Since the cohort program, several organizations in the watershed have collaborated to create a Mississippi River canoe event. As noted by one REM participant, "we have a history of working together but not these large events to coordinate. This is the first time I've witnessed that."



### Creating Economic Viability

This work encompassed a wide range of projects ranging from large regional or multi-county planning projects to consulting with individual counties and communities to providing education and decision-making support for individual businesses and entrepreneurs.

- The [ExCEED](#) program led a planning process with the Green Hills Heritage Highway Initiative in north central Missouri that USADA selected as a high quality plan, positioning the region for access to USDA-RD's 10% set aside funds for a regional project as well as up to 20 bonus points on USDA-RD grant and loan applications.
- MU extension partnered with the Ozark Regional Libraries to conduct workshops to raise the visibility of the libraries in the three counties and highlight how the libraries are partners in their communities, which contributed to the passing of a new library levy that will raise more than 1 million dollars annually.
- [Alianzas](#) conducted training for more than 90 Missouri Farm Bureau Insurance executives to help them better understand Latino values, state demographics and culture differences as the company prepared to roll out a special program to reach this audience.
- The work of the [Missouri Development Program](#) from 2015 through 2017 led to 813 new businesses created, more than 29,000 jobs created or retained, \$1.19 billion in sales increases, \$347 million in new investment and \$1.17 billion in government contracts. This represented more than a 21 percent increase in jobs created compared to 2014 through 2016 and an increase of nearly 55% in government contracts.



### Volunteer Reception Center (VRC)

When disasters happen in Nebraska, spontaneous volunteers play a critical role in the clean-up effort. But managing these volunteers is no small task.

In partnership with the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, Nebraska Citizen Corps/Medical Reserve Corps, the Corporation for National and Community Service and Nebraska Extension, a pilot course was delivered in Dewitt, Nebraska that focused on how to plan for and operate a Volunteer Reception Center (VRC) to help lessen the challenge of managing volunteers. The session incorporated a hands-on simulation in setting up and managing a VRC and was designated as a FEMA recognized training.

Participants represented county government, local emergency management, higher education, faith-based organizations, and volunteer organizations. Over 90 % of the participants who completed the post-training survey believed they were better prepared

to manage spontaneous volunteers and over 80% agreed they connect with other people who could be valuable resources in the future during a disaster.



### Lead Local Boardmanship Training

NDSU Extension provides training for elected and appointed leaders to help them feel more confident to serve on boards, councils and committees. Last year, multiple community leadership courses were provided including a one-day Lead Local boardmanship training, a five-session Growing Leaders series, and an 18-month Rural Leadership North Dakota program. Participants report feeling better prepared and more willing to serve after completing any of NDSU Extension's leadership training programs.

This matters in North Dakota because:



NDSU Extension provides education and assistance as the Tri-County Tourism Alliance board work together to expand the economy through cultural and heritage tourism in the counties of Logan, Emmons and McIntosh. This group has worked to develop the Lawrence Welk homestead, assisted in a Women Behind the Plow photographic exhibit, book, and documentary, held a Public History Field School, hosted a kuchen contest with 51 entries, published Gutes Essen, a recipe and story book highlighting good eating in German-Russian county, and created an Oktoberfest annual event. This region has looked at its cultural heritage as an asset and in turn capitalized on it for social capital building as well as tourism development opportunity.

Partnerships with local leaders can impact policy, system and environmental change by educating public officials on preventive measures to address the leading causes of preventable diseases, disability and death. NDSU Extension in partnership with the Grand Forks Health Department, worked to change concession stand offerings at the three largest ice arenas in the community. Guidelines were developed and a Better Bites menu was implemented with healthier options. Follow-up surveys show an increase in concession purchases and requests for more variety in healthy fare. These local results provide evidence of the intersection of health, the economy, and leadership for systems change.

As part of a partnership with the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, the Building Tomorrow's Leaders program was developed for schools and Extension professionals to use with high school youth. This eight-session program educates high school youth about effective meeting management, parliamentary procedure, career preparation, leadership etiquette, managing conflict, running for office and implementing a local project. In a follow-up survey, 92% of students participating in the pilot program reported they plan to take a leadership role in an organization or seek an elected role when available. North Dakota's Governor has agreed to feature local community projects done by students in the Building Tomorrow's Leaders program on his website as part of his Main Street Initiative.



Neil Meidinger cutting sausage, NDSU

Why this matters:



### Energy: Considerations for Investing in Photovoltaic Solar Systems

The cost of photovoltaic (PV) solar systems continues to fall. As such, many agricultural producers are considering investments in PV systems to power their farms. Decisions involve consideration of system costs, design, tax impacts, value of energy production, and ongoing annual costs. To help evaluate investment decisions, the Solar Energy in Agriculture: Considerations for Investing in Photovoltaic Solar Systems program was designed. To support this program, Extension professionals from the Ohio State University and the University of Wyoming created a six-part bulletin series titled, Solar Electric Investment Analysis. In partnership with Virginia Tech Cooperative Extension, Michigan State University Extension, University of Nebraska Extension, and the U.S. Department of Energy, the materials have been most recently shared via a series of Zoom webinars which have reached 80 participants 16 states and three countries. Since 2015, this program has been offered over 48 times in Ohio, engaging more than 2,400 participants. Feedback from program participants indicates the program materials and software modeling support is extremely valuable, guiding informed decisions on major solar investment projects throughout Ohio.



### Community and Organizational Leadership Development

Community and Organizational Leadership Development efforts included partnerships with over 20 organizations involving more than 1400 people to engage in strategic planning, alignment, and/or compression planning. A key goal of these efforts is to maximize efficiency and effectiveness, and in 2017 included work with the following, for example: University of Dayton Family Collaborative, Partners for Environment, Ohio Environ Leaders Institute, Huffman Historic District, Ohio/West Virginia Food Hub Team, OSU Center for Cooperatives, Greene County Food Council, Clark County Local Food Council, Miami County Food Council, Ohio Food Policy Network.

Community Economics efforts are designed to inform decision makers with real local data that enable the development of effective strategies and policies to affect change. Examples of such applied research in 2017 include an examination of Ohio's maple industry; a survey of manufacturing, distribution and service-oriented wages and benefits; and, partnerships with community development officials in three communities across Ohio to engage in business retention and expansion survey programs. Such activities help to inform employer benchmarking and the direction and focus of workforce training efforts.



### Strengthening Businesses

Providing opportunities for young people to stay in rural communities experiencing population decline is a priority in South Dakota. Businesses and entrepreneurial ventures provide the job and work opportunities for young people to stay in rural communities. The SDSU Extension Community Vitality program works to strengthen businesses and promote entrepreneurship in South Dakota. "Small Business is Everybody's Business" is a conference delivered via the Dakota Digital Network to bring national speakers to young entrepreneurs in local communities. "Small Business Basics" is 4-6 sessions to help current and potential business owner focus on the fundamentals of business planning and networking with resource providers. "Secrets of Service: Improving Customer Satisfaction" helps small businesses improve client/customer relationships in order to grow and strengthen their business.



### Wisconsin Forest Practices Study

Leading the nation in paper production and wood furniture manufacturing, Wisconsin's \$24.7 billion forest products industry provides 64,000 jobs, and employee compensation adds another \$6.4 billion to local economies. (See [Factsheets](#)) Many communities depend on a sustainable forest products industry. But who is managing this valuable forest resource, and how? As harvesting from industry-owned land decreased, to ensure a continuous timber supply the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) looked toward those who own nearly 70% of the 17 million acres of forested land — private woodland owners. In 2013, the Legislature funded the Wisconsin Council on Forestry's Wisconsin Forest Practices Study (WFPS) to address knowledge gaps

at the interface of forest policy and practice. Strong partnerships formed among the DNR, University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension, neighboring Land Grant universities, federal, state, local, regional and tribal agencies, industry professionals, foresters, loggers and others who identified and are now implementing final study recommendations.

Only a small percent of private woodland owners participate in learning events, and only about 25% have Managed Forest Law (MFL) plans covering 3,576,589 acres. Among their top sources of advice, 16% received forestry advice from Cooperative Extension. To further promote sustainable management by the state's 414,000 non-industrial private forest landowners, Cooperative Extension is aiming to identify and reach those who are seeking technical assistance. This assistance will help landowners manage their woodlands by adopting MFL plans, which will encourage continued forest management by the next generation of landowners. There is a great need for this assistance, as more than 6 million acres of family-owned forests are yet to be covered by MFL plans (DNR, 2013). An increase in acres enrolled in the Managed Forest Law program ensures a continuous supply of timber from private lands for the next 25 to 50 years.

**Sustaining forestry resources:** As a direct result of Cooperative Extension engagement, the Wisconsin Forest Practices Study (WFPS) generated new knowledge about the forestry sector and challenges faced in the economics of sustainable forestry. A small team representing forest industry, university extension faculty, other university and non-profit staff, and woodland owners prioritized 13 recommendations from the WFPS in three areas:

- Outreach programs to let landowners know the value of forest management to achieve wildlife, hunting, and forest health objectives.
- Continue and expand statewide training of public, cooperating and consultant foresters on forestry economic issues.
- Improve forester training, especially related to tree quality assessment, order of retention, and northern hardwood management principles.

Of the 105 individuals representing 2,161 acres of woodlands attending 2017 Learn About Your Land classes, 76% took on activities related to class topics such as removing invasive species or improving wildlife habitat, 5% submitted an MFL application, and 21% outlined activities for the next 2+ years. MFL is a landowner incentive program that encourages sustainable forestry on private woodlands in Wisconsin. Sustainable forest management benefits Wisconsin's economy, hunting, fishing, wildlife, recreation, soils, waterways, and air quality — and renews beautiful forests for everyone to enjoy. Since 2007, classes have been held in 141 locations reaching 4,906 households and over 325,000 acres of woodland. ([See supportive resources and events.](#))



Wisconsin extension state specialist Bret Shaw (standing) and Tricia Gorby (third from left) with partners from the DNR and Aldo Leopold Foundation created an initiative that supports area educators' outreach promoting sustainable forestry practices — educating foresters how to communicate more effectively with woodland owners. Forester workshops are held with an accompanying online curriculum that includes oak management, engaging women woodland owners, removing invasive species and planting trees. Forestry professionals can visit their web site for information to help them be more effective in their work with private landowners: [forestryinsights.org](http://forestryinsights.org) — Photo courtesy of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources



## Indicators by State

	Illinois	Indiana	Iowa	Kansas	Michigan	Minnesota	Missouri	Nebraska	North Dakota	Ohio	South Dakota	Wisconsin
Educational Contacts	11668	56996	8600	435746	9481	43857						
Number of racial minority contacts	1069	1140		54888	768	7327	43857	330	5321	6772	1920	573449
Number of Hispanic contacts	777	3420		10703	190	917	7327	63	168	1347	172	82,131
Number of participants reporting new leadership roles and opportunities undertaken	651	720	360	88	208	56	917	30	5	94	14	52047
Number of business plans developed		95		497	3	3	56	20	92	262	6	
Number of community or organizational plans/policies developed	59	15		453	18	67	3	5		65	9	
Number of community or organizational plans/policies adopted and/or implemented	54		535	489	11	14	67	15	7	44	4	
No. of businesses created	0	95		387		252	14	15	7	31	2	
No. of jobs created	3	35		650	104	5077	252	5	1	1		
No. of jobs retained		38		937		7198	5077	5	3	249	1	
Dollar value of volunteer hours leveraged to deliver programs (Independent Sector value)	\$8,938	\$175,039			\$82,685	\$66,999	7198		2	3712	2	
Dollar value of organization and/or community-generated volunteer hours (based on Independent Sector hr value)	\$68,996	\$138,419	\$1,280,466		\$190,740	\$49,503	\$66,999	\$23,629		\$16,565		
Number of volunteer hours for community generated work	2,853	12,985	57,895		7,225	2,323	\$49,503	\$31,417	\$73,965	\$7,616		
Dollar value of efficiencies and savings	\$-					\$2,326,683	2,323	1,412	2,912	27,750	38	
Dollar value of grants and resources leveraged/generated by communities	\$6,482,950	\$3,699,483	\$290,323	\$133,330	\$289,000	\$2,276,380	\$2,326,683			\$252,500		
Dollar value of resources leveraged by businesses	\$-	\$1,689,917	\$486,539	\$76,471,141	\$382,560	\$101,349,479	\$2,276,380	\$103,280	\$595,614	\$57,500	\$46,000	

\*Indicator definitions can be found on the next page.

Data for this report collected by Extension systems of 1862 land grant universities located in states highlighted in the NCRCRD Logo. This report is compiled and published by the NCRCRD, a federally and regionally funded center hosted by Michigan State University. Michigan State University is an affirmative action, equal-opportunity employer.

North Central States 2017 Impact Indicators	Definition
Educational Contacts	General principle: attribution. Someone from outside Extension must be willing to state the program produced the result.
Number of racial minority contacts	Persons who received educational services via face-to-face or live distance enabled sessions. Persons participating more than once should be counted more than once.
Number of Hispanic contacts	Contacts (as above) who self-report as non-white racial status
Number of participants reporting new leadership roles and opportunities undertaken	Contacts (as above) who self-report as Hispanic or Latino
Number of business plans developed	New leadership roles may include formal (e.g. board member) or informal (e.g. advocate, group leader). Use attribution principle.
Number of community or organizational plans/policies developed	Includes formal business plans and informal strategic changes. Use attribution principle.
Number of community or organizational, plans/policies adopted and/or implemented	Includes formally adopted plans by official agencies as well as strategies. Use attribution principle.
No. of businesses created	Includes plans (as above) wholly or partially adopted or implemented. Use attribution principle.
No. of jobs created/	New business start ups or firms that moved into the area. Use attribution principle.
No. of jobs retained	New jobs in the area as a result of programs. Use attribution principle.
Dollar value of volunteer hours leveraged to deliver programs (Independent Sector value)	Existing jobs that were at risk, protected by programs. Use attribution principle.
Dollar value of organization and/or community-generated volunteer hours (based on Independent Sector hr value)	Count hours provided by individuals in executing the program (include volunteer hours required for certification).
Number of volunteer hours for community generated work	Count hours indirectly generated by programs. Example: person receiving training recruits additional volunteers. Use attribution principle.
Dollar value of efficiencies and savings	See above.
Dollar value of grants and resources leveraged/generated by communities	Count savings through improved processes and approaches due to programs.
Dollar value of resources leveraged by businesses	Includes loans and investments. Use attribution principle.

