

A YEAR OF TRANSITION:

North Central Regional Center for Rural Development Annual Report 2009



As I write this, the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development has been at Michigan State University for less than one year. It has been a tremendous pleasure to serve as the transitional director. I'm very grateful for the assistance and coaching from colleagues at Iowa State, especially Cornelia Flora, Julie Stewart and Joe Colletti. It is wonderful that many of the most popular materials dating from the years of good work in Iowa can still be accessed from our web site.

It has been a year of learning for me. I visited the other 11 states in the region to engage researchers, Extension professionals, administrators and stakeholders in dialog about current issues the center might address through its work. State Extension program leaders were instrumental in helping coordinate successful visits. Our outstanding board of directors helped refine the themes and plans to execute them. The themes that emerged from my state visits are:

- Technology assessment and adoption
- Leadership development
- Entrepreneurial communities
- Sustainable communities

There is much to do, but the good news is that I know the region has a wonderful set of institutions and colleagues to support the work. This is evident in the tremendous response to the center's small grant program, which is funding multistate groups of land-grant professionals to execute projects consistent with our main themes. I invite you to read about the projects in the following pages.

As I toured our region, it became clear that the land-grant system would be well served by increased multistate collaboration. Each institution has a rich tradition, but each has grown in its own ways, yielding particular areas of strength. Thus the benefits of exchange of technical resources can translate into increased prosperity for our rural areas. The center has a clear role to play in knitting together our collective abilities to address current and future rural issues.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Loveridge".

Scott Loveridge
Transitional Director



New Beginnings

The North Central Regional Center for Rural Development (NCRCRD) is one of four centers in the United States that work to improve opportunities and quality of life in rural communities. With funding from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture and the land-grant universities in its 12-state region, the NCRCRD engages Extension professionals, researchers and other partners to address issues that affect rural areas across the region. Beginning in July 2009, Michigan State University took on the responsibility of hosting the NCRCRD, after the center's many years of success at Iowa State University.

Themes

Technology assessment and adoption. NCRCRD projects will help move knowledge of emerging technologies from universities to rural communities, assessing on-the-ground readiness for actual implementation and identifying potential consequences, both positive and negative.

Sustainable communities. How do rural communities interact with the environment? NCRCRD projects will help communities identify practices to improve environmental outcomes and new opportunities for local, "green" jobs. Conversations with a broad coalition of stakeholders will address population decline, restoration and development of natural resources, and how to engage local youth and underserved populations.

Leadership development. Rural areas need local leaders to bring change to rural families and communities. NCRCRD projects will focus on identifying and training those leaders and helping them pass leadership roles on to the next generation and newer arrivals. Looking at unique systems of governance in Native American population may bring a new perspective to leadership development.

Entrepreneurial communities. NCRCRD projects will help rural communities harness their unique assets and turn them into business opportunities. Supporting entrepreneurial activities and helping youth connect with entrepreneurial career options are keys to economic success in many rural areas. The "new Americans" are potentially a key asset in entrepreneurial development due to their increased willingness to start businesses and their connections to underserved markets.

Small Grants Program

Small grants to multistate teams are helping the NCRCRD achieve its theme-driven goals. The current set of projects includes:

Improving practice and collaboration to aid distressed rural communities. Land-grant university faculty members and community partners will participate in a two-day meeting to compare three rural development approaches: Home Town Competitiveness (HTC), Entrepreneurship Investigation (ESI) and Energizing Entrepreneurship (e2). Best practices will emerge, as well as recommendations to increase collaboration between land-grant universities and rural development organizations. PI: Cordes, S. (Purdue U.). Co-PI: Emery, M. (Iowa State).

Food system approaches in rural communities. Farmers, operators of food- and agriculture-related businesses and researchers will participate in a conference to share ideas on food system approaches in three types of rural communities in Missouri and Nebraska: declining resource-dependent, chronically poor, and communities with amenity-driven growth along with resource-based decline. PI: Hendrickson, M. (U. Missouri). Co-PI: Cantrell, R. (U. Nebraska).



Rural alliance for service learning. Having college students do community service work for course credit is increasingly popular. This project seeks to learn how rural communities benefit from such efforts, especially in comparison to similar efforts in urban areas. Researchers will look at access, effectiveness and what makes community service in rural settings unique. Outcomes will include a regional network of rural service learning practitioners. PI: Proulx-Curry, P. (U. Wisconsin-Madison). Co-PIs: Stoecker, R. (U. Wisconsin-Madison), Goreham, G. (NDSU), Nagy, D. (SDSU), Mark C. (Michigan State U.), Wood, S. (Kansas State U.).

Immigration reform: implications for farmers, farm workers and communities. This project seeks improved understanding of how newcomers from other countries are affecting agriculture and agricultural communities through three core elements: analysis of current immigration patterns and policies, resulting in benchmarks; a national conference that includes a north central region panel of scholars and stakeholders; and an assessment and summary of ongoing migration and farm labor developments, reported in the Rural Migration News (<http://migration.ucdavis.edu>). PI: Martinez, R. (Michigan State U.). Co-PI: Flora, C. (Iowa State).

Relocalizing our food shed: new models and methodologies for planning our food future. This symposium will bring together members of the academic community (faculty, staff and students) and other experts and community partners to discuss new ways to meet public needs associated with redesigning our food system. Participants will hail from social and agricultural sciences and humanities disciplines. PI: Adamek, M. (U. Minnesota). Co-PIs: Cadieux, V. (U. Minnesota), Gold, A. (NDSU), Kurzer, M. (U. Minnesota), Kutka, F. (NDSU), Pesch, R. (U. Minnesota), Porter, P. (U. Minnesota), Robertson, C. (U. Minnesota), Stark, S. (U. Minnesota-Duluth).

Community retail development toolbox project. This project will combine retail analysis tools and resources developed by Extension educators throughout the north central region into one online collaborative, complete with accessible, multimedia curricula. This self-help resource will help entrepreneurs, commerce leaders and community and economic development leaders make more informed decisions. The three-community pilot will be used to refine content and develop train-the-trainer opportunities. PI: Davis, G. (Ohio State U.). Co-PIs: Clark, J. (Ohio State U.), Irwin, E. (Ohio State U.), Pesch, R. (U. Minnesota), Ryan, B. (U. Wisconsin-Madison), Schwartau, B. (U. Minnesota).

Building Extension's capacity for a sustainable communities program. The North Central Region Task Force for Sustainable Communities will develop a sustainable communities education program that includes outreach tools to help Extension professionals use existing materials; professional development webinars and curriculum; a logic model for implementing sustainable development activities in rural communities; and dissemination of project results through Extension and research channels. Using social networking tools from the eXtension Land Use Planning Community of Practice will offer distance learning and networking opportunities. PI: Haines, A. (U. Wisconsin-Stevens Point). Co-PI: Beyea, W. (Michigan State U.).

Innovations and success in community and economic development Extension programming: mapping future success strategies. A number of communities in the region are being proactive about positioning themselves for success, often through Extension-led initiatives. This project will look at the successful, innovative initiatives practiced by leading community and economic development practitioners, many of which are financed by Extension operations. PI: Ivan, D. (Michigan State U.). Co-PIs: Emery, M. (Iowa State), Walzer, N. (Northern Illinois).



North Central Land-Grant Colleges and Universities

1862 Institutions

Iowa State University
Kansas State University
Michigan State University
North Dakota State University
Ohio State University
Purdue University
South Dakota State University
University of Illinois
University of Minnesota
University of Missouri
University of Nebraska
University of Wisconsin

1890 Institutions

Lincoln University

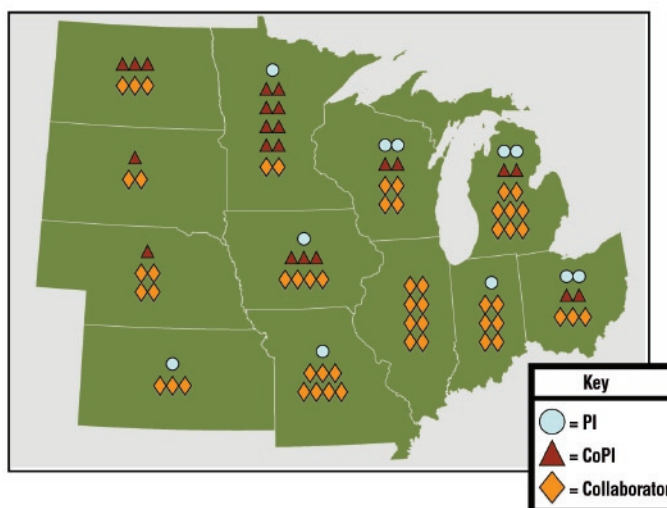
1994 Institutions

Bay Mills Community College
Cankdeska Cikana Community College
College of Menominee Nation
Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College
Fort Berthold Community College
Haskell Indian Nations University
Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College
Leech Lake Tribal College
Little Priest Tribal College
Nebraska Indian Community College
Oglala Lakota College
Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College
Si Tanka University
Sinte Gleska University
Sisseton Wahpeton Community College
Sitting Bull College
Turtle Mountain Community College
United Tribes Technical College
White Earth Tribal and Community College

Federally Designated Hispanic-Serving Institutions

Daly College
Donnelly College
Morton College
NW Illinois University
St. Augustine College
Waubonsee Community College

NCRCRD Small Grants Program 2009-10 Awards



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