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Community & Economic Development Update

News & Resources from University of Wisconsin-Extension Center for Community & Economic Development
June - July 2011

Dear Colleagues-

We are all inundated with lots of electronic (and even quite a few paper) newsletters these days. Some we can't wait to read. Others, not so much. We'd like to know about what newsletters and blogs you like. What ones do you find useful and reliable? So here's the challenge: email us with your recommendations for newsletters and blogs that you feel others might find useful too. We'll want to know the "Who, What, Why and How" of your recommended reading - who publishes it; the subjects it addresses (what); what it offers you professionally (why); and the website or subscription details so that others can enjoy it too (how). Submit your nominations to cced@uwex.edu. Here's one we like on Rural Entrepreneurship: http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs011/1102609499276/archive/1102626416447.html
- Center for Community and Economic Development
If I wanted to help a community duplicate Fairfield's success in economic development, what would I tell them? What would I have them do? What would I do?

Asset Quilting - Identify and value the resources and assets within a community. This fosters ownership of the community. If the community does not view themselves as innovative or entrepreneurial, there is little hope that entrepreneurs will emerge. Asset quilting is a tool for the community, and the results of asset quilting are for the community not outsiders.

Be supportive - Foster a supportive environment. No agency or formula can create entrepreneurship, but they can create and offer space and place and time for networks to develop naturally. Make it cafeteria-style or like speed-dating, then create means for the network to provide peer support.

Celebrate your entrepreneurs - Come up with some way to highlight and showcase the successful entrepreneurs. Being an entrepreneur often involves taking risks; by recognizing those people that were willing to do so, an incentive is built in to be more entrepreneurial. In Fairfield, they have created an entrepreneur hall of fame.

Failure is good - Failure implies that people are taking risks, being innovative, trying new things, being creative. Redefine failure as step in innovation; failed businesses are compost for future business ideas. The goal is to change the culture - to celebrate entrepreneurship.

Idea Biz Bounce - How to grow entrepreneurs? Surround them around other creative people other entrepreneurs. Get entrepreneurs together and allow each person to present their idea in a few minutes - an "elevator speech" - in order for everyone to garner advice from each other, similar to speed dating. Or work in teams and have everyone introduce their partners to the others. Everyone should ask: "Is this a good idea?" and "What would it take to work?"

Have a mix of Angel Funders and Microlend Programs - Most small business start-ups need equity, not debt. Upfront funding means a business failure need not prevent an entrepreneur from learning from mistakes and gaining insight necessary to try something new later.

E-commerce - In a small town that is distant from large major cities and high populations, like Fairfield, there must be a way to tap into a larger market to sustain new businesses and innovative ideas from entrepreneurs. To overcome the lack of customers in a small town, e-commerce allows a business to sell goods and products around the world.

Not just about second-stage businesses - Second-stage businesses are those that are poised for expansion and growth into a large business. Supporting such businesses is an important part of any economic development strategy, but most communities, whether large cities and small towns, will not have a vast stock of these second-stage businesses, so make sure you're ready to nurture and support businesses at all stages of their existence, not just the established ones.

Best, not better - For business ideas to succeed in a competitive environment, just being better than others may not be enough. Encourage entrepreneurs to think about how their business plan is going to be the best at what they do. By fostering this mentality, you can help good businesses become great.
How are County Populations Changing Across the US?

The map above, created by Matt Kures from the UW-Extension Center for Community & Economic Development, shows how county populations across the United States have changed since 2000. This appeared in the latest issue of the Capital Region Business Journal.
Update from the Building Community Capacity through Broadband (BCCB) Project

As we write this newsletter, the future of the BCCB Project is still pending approval in the state budget, but the webinar below will be offered as planned. You can read the latest on how this has progressed from Chancellor Ray Cross at http://broadband.uwex.edu/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Broadband-compromise-reached_.pdf or follow along on the blog at http://broadband.uwex.edu/media/

The BCCB initiative is offering a free interactive webinar on Thursday, June 23, for businesses to learn how to successfully develop an online business presence. The webinar is offered as part of the "Building Community Capacity through Broadband" initiative, but is available to others outside of our demonstration communities.

Taking Charge of Your Online Presence
Thursday, June 23, 2011
10:00 - 11:30 a.m. Central Time

Presenter:
Connie Hancock is an Extension Educator working for the University of Nebraska Extension offices in Cheyenne and Kimball-Banner Counties. Her area of focus is providing educational programming to communities and businesses in the areas of Building Your Online Presence and Community Capacity Building. Connie's main interest lies in helping communities and businesses focus on the New Economy and the impact of technology on economic development. To register for this free program, please visit http://broadband.uwex.edu/resources/webinars/

We encourage you to host a community site and invite business people within your community to participate. There are two facilitated activities (we will provide you instructions!) that are part of this program. After registering at the URL above, we will send you the connection information and required information on June 13 via e-mail (That e-mail will come from Jennifer Smith in the BCCB office). Hosting will require an Internet connection, projector (for larger groups), speakers/sound, and the option of a telephone connection of VOIP for the audio.

**County Extension Educators Economic Development 101 Survey Results**

Thank you to those of you who completed the Center for Community & Economic Development's Economic Development 101 survey. The topics of greatest interest for an upcoming in-service included economic gardening (see the economic gardening update in this issue!), buy local & local economy, and asset based economic development strategies. We'll be using this survey to design an Economic Development in-service for colleagues to be scheduled in early 2012.

**Downtown Economic Development Tools and Resources**

Please share the following with business and community leaders working to strengthen economic conditions in their downtown districts. For more information, contact: bill.ryan@uwex.edu

**Revitalizing Wisconsin's Downtowns webinar series**

The next Revitalizing Wisconsin's Downtowns webinar will be on Thursday, October 20, 2011 (time to be determined). The topic: *Bringing Small Industry to Downtowns by Kennedy Smith*. It will be broadcast from the Wisconsin Conference on Downtown Revitalization. For more information on your nearest site host/facilitator, contact Chuck Law or Bill Ryan. http://lgc.uwex.edu/downtowns/

**Wisconsin Conference on Downtown Revitalization - Hold October 20, 2011**

The October 20, 2011 conference in Fond du Lac will focus on helping your downtown become a place of employment in your community. Wisconsin Main Street, the Wisconsin Downtown Action Council and UW-Extension are planning the educational sessions for the 2011 conference.
Saving the Rural Grocery Store
Local grocery stores are an important part of the economic structure that helps sustain rural communities, as well as providing jobs and tax revenue. They also provide social opportunities for local residents and offer an important source of nutrition, especially to those who may not have access to shopping in neighboring towns. Unfortunately, it has become increasingly difficult for rural grocers to compete with larger chains, convenience, and big box stores, forcing many owners to close their doors permanently (Source: Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs). For more information on what can be done to save our rural grocers, see: http://www.ruralgrocery.org/

Tourism Economic Impact Data

The County Fair may be more valuable than you think!
A couple of years ago, CCED affiliate and UW-Whitewater Economist Russ Kashian prepared an economic impact analysis of the Walworth County Fair. Dr. Kashian has worked with others around the state to help them design a similar studies or contract with his department to provide this analysis. The bottom line is that festivals and events such as this can have an important positive impact on our local economy.

White House Council Established To Strengthen Rural Communities
Earlier this month the White House established a council that may help to bring resources to rural communities. According to the USDA, "In the coming months, the White House Rural Council will focus on job creation and economic development by increasing the flow of capital to rural areas, promoting innovation, expanding digital and physical networks, and celebrating opportunity through America's natural resources. The Council will begin discussing key factors for growth, including:

- **Jobs**: Improve job training and workforce development in rural America
- **Agriculture**: Expand markets for agriculture, including regional food systems and exports
- **Access to Credit**: Increase opportunity by expanding access to capital in rural communities and fostering local investment
- **Innovation**: Promote the expansion of biofuels production capacity and community based renewable energy projects
- **Networks**: Develop high-growth regional economies by capitalizing on inherent regional strengths
- **Health Care**: Improve access to quality health care through expansion of health technology systems
- **Education**: Increase post-secondary enrollment rates and
completion for rural students

- **Broadband**: Support the President's plan to increase broadband opportunities in rural America
- **Infrastructure**: Coordinate investment in critical infrastructure
- **Ecosystem markets**: Expanding opportunities for conservation, outdoor opportunities and economic growth on working lands and public lands

### More on Census Data for Wisconsin's Counties

Looking for Data from the US Census? The [Applied Population Laboratory](http://www.census.gov) is releasing a series of analyses of Census data. The latest highlights the increase in single-father households in Wisconsin. You can download the data by county and maps of these trends [here](http://www.census.gov). For more information about how to access and use Census data, please visit [the Census' guide for rural communities](http://www.census.gov).

### Agricultural Land Values Increasing Across Midwest

"According to the most recent *AgLetter*, Seventh District farmland values in the first quarter of 2011 were 16 percent higher than a year ago. The value of "good" agricultural land in the first quarter of 2011 was 5 percent higher than in the fourth quarter of 2010." The *AgLetter* is published by the ChicagoFed four times each year on agricultural land values and credit conditions, using data from a quarterly survey. You can [read more about the surge in Midwest Farmland Values here](http://www.census.gov) or download [historical data (excel) on credit conditions](http://www.census.gov) and [district land values](http://www.census.gov).

### Survey: Business Leaders Are Surprised That Sustainability Actually Pays Off


### Micro-lending 101
There was a flurry of emails this month from county educators looking for examples of "micro-lending." According to KIVA, Microcredit essential "micro-lending" or "micro-credit" “is a general term to describe financial services to low-income individuals or to those who do not have access to typical banking services.” Typically these services are offered in the form of very small loans. I've been following a few of these international micro-credit programs and thought I'd share. These certainly are not exhaustive so feel free to email any other local examples you are aware of.  - Laura Brown

International Examples:
- Grameen Bank / Muhammad Yunus
  http://www.kiva.org/about
- Accion http://www.accion.org/#

United States Examples
- US Microfinance Conference
- The Opportunity Fund
- Slow Money (for food and agriculture)
- Grameen America

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