

North Central Region Convening Work Plan: Management chart

Following is a list of outcomes derived from planning at the North Central Convening held May 4-5, 2010. The first segment of the Convening concentrated on sharing best practices, and featured breakout and sessions and learning stations. Participants then turned their attention to planning, and developed Outcomes using the Strategic Doing process.

In order to foster meaningful community and economic environment, a holistic approach to development is required. With this in mind, the North Central Region worked with the overarching 20 year vision of improved quality of life for all residents encompassing the four focus tracks of the USDA-RD: energy, broadband, food and tourism, and small business and entrepreneurship. As each team works on specific projects, they remain part of the greater whole allowing synergistic regional activities to develop that may cross the topic silos. The North Central Region also concentrated on resources already available to build new partnerships and coalitions, helping to achieve immediate and near-future deliverables. As the projects develop, additional partners and resources will be identified and included.

Each of the four tracks will have visions more specific to their topic while the 20-year vision for the region is: ***“The North Central region is well known for the richness and diversity of its bio-regions; a culture of entrepreneurship; high speed, quality, affordable broadband to all rural households and businesses; and federal and state policies amenable to local energy initiatives”.***

Work Area: Energy

As the United States strives to become less dependent on foreign energy sources, this region of the country becomes a natural source of alternative energy from bio-fuels to wind. The energy groups focused on exploring and sharing best-practice models while working to encourage new initiatives.

Strategic Outcome	Action Steps	Who is working on it?	Notes
Federal and state policies amenable to local initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore partnership with Midwest Energy Summit (Jane Leonard, Yvonne Simon) • Explore models for helping communities and organizations translate energy conservation initiatives into \$. • Learn what exists 	Jane Leonard -contact, Yvonne Simon, Mark Edelman	
Increased farm based energy production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop straw proposal for anaerobic digester collaborative / cooperative business model (Rich Hackner) • Federal policy aligns with farm-level innovations to grow bio mass and possibly use conservation crop (Anne H. Silvis) • Set up training program for operation & maintenance of anaerobic digesters (Rich Hackner) 	Rich Hackner, Anne Silvis	
Wind resource monitoring info is shared across the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggest protocol for monitoring • Get agreement across region • What info will be collected & how it was collected 	Chris Merrett, Rich Hasselman	

Work Area: Local Foods and Tourism

The ever-increasing concern about food safety which is driving consumers to look for more local food sources coupled with the tourism opportunities built around food and local culture offer the North Central Region a unique development opportunity. This track generated widespread interest at the convening (as is evident by the variety of projects planned).

Strategic Outcome	Action Steps	Who is working on it?	Notes
<p>Developed pilot “passport” project with four counties increasing multi-county regional tourism where synergies/commonalities exist – telling the “secret or untold story” of the area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monroe, Jackson, Vernon and Juneau Counties of central Wisconsin will be test case • Create a map with stamps for each destination visited. Prizes to be awarded based on how many stamps collected – weekly, monthly drawings for prizes or discounts • Develop list of attractions/point of interest in the 4 counties – “Hidden Secrets” of the region. • Contact Green County for information on the passport they already do. 	<p>Kelly Murray (kmurray@tomahwisconsin.com), Nodji Van Wychen (wetherby@mwt.net) and Lorry Erickson (info@ibuymoco.com)</p>	<p>What assets / resources are needed/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance indentifying “gems” in region. Contacts: Bernie Arena (president of Hidden Valleys); Barb brower, Black River Area Chamber of Commerce – Jackson County; Juneau County Economic Development Office; Sue Noble for Vernon County. • Websites for each county – Bikes & Berries, etc. • Facebook – photos of attractions/stops w/description • “Rewards System” • Small prize per stop • Drawing for “X” number of baskets \$100.00 (5 basket/season) • PDF file for passport & where can pick up hard copies (Chambers and participating businesses) • Press Releases - Lorry
<p>A regional network based on food/culture/history/arts/beverages that fosters tourism & economic opportunity has been formed along the Missouri River from Nebraska City, NE to Kansas City, MO.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact potential participants (wineries, B&B’s, food producers) to build interest and plant seeds for a regional meeting within a year • Develop list of attractions/points of interest in four-county region to begin telling their unique story 	<p>Mary Leuci leucim@missouri.edu; Linda Fettig Linda.fettig@nebraska.gov 308)380-4966; Sharon Gulick gulicks@missouri.edu</p>	<p>What assets / resources are needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kansas links & participants • Participation & commitment from those in region including funders & marketing & business assistance. as well as local government. & businesses

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct at least one regional meeting to discuss regional network plan 		
Robust learning community promoting and educating on the richness and diversity of our bio-regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up LinkedIn space for networking on regional initiatives – food and beverages/tourism/culture/history/arts • Hold two regional meetings in 3-state “Driftless” region 	Michelle Miller mmmille6@facstaff.wisc.edu ; Mary Leuci leucim@missouri.edu ; Linda Fettig Linda.fettig@nebraska.gov 308)380-4966	What assets / resources are needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media and other ways to get word out • Regional participation
Create infrastructure for distribution centers and marketing - Pilot distribution centers established and functioning in Wisconsin, Nebraska and Missouri. Educate on local foods distribution, safety and accessibility Coordinate and facilitate discussion on mechanics of running a business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue conversations with WI, NE & MO to further develop pilot project • Identify “go-to” person in each region to help lead pilot effort • Establish funding sources 	Sue Noble (WI) Kayla Schnuelle (NE) MO - ?	
Improve Technical Assistance through developing a better match between funding priorities/programs and regional realities by involving cross agency collaboration, increased eligibility, clear and more concise application process for NOFAs (Notice of Funding Availability)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify opportunities to access more funding • Convene evening meeting at national small farm conference to discuss opportunities and recommendations for changing federal language • Identify federal entities to work with on program/language recommendations 	Marty Gerencer – m_gerencer@hotmail.com Wallace Center; Kathy Schmitt – Kathy.schmitt@wi.gov ; Kathie Starkweather, center for Rural Affairs - trishd@cfra.org	What assets / resources are needed: National connections, funding knowledge & field experience
Articulate a vision for how local food fits into the larger food system and how commodity agriculture fits into this new food system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strategies for how to re-energize/re-envisioning/re-imagining values of the coop model 	Sally Cutler: scutler@ncwwdb.org , Kara Slaughter: kslaughter@wisconsinfarmersunion.com , Sarah Lloyd: sarah_lloyd@centurytel.net	What assets / resources are needed: Farmers Union will meet w/ coop specialist(s) Margaret Bau and Center for Coops – UW Madison plan perhaps a forum on co-ops

Work Area: Small Business and Entrepreneurship

Many of the service providers present at the convening are dealing with population losses in rural areas and the devolution of businesses and services. Rural regions often lack critical mass to attract traditional manufacturing so innovation and entrepreneurship become viable development options. This track drew participants knowledgeable about the field and ready to build unique partnerships

Strategic Outcome	Action Steps	Who is working on it?	Notes
<p>Form a network of Community Development Technical Assistance for professionals and community leaders to have easy access to and gain information, education, mentoring and training on promising best practices and innovative approaches to community economic development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet July in New Orleans to determine action steps to develop this network • Produce a special issue of Community Development Society Journal focused on Innovative Approaches to Community Change • Survey existing programs that have been successful in Community Change Initiatives 	<p>Norm Walzer-contact, David Ivan, Connie Loden, Dick Senese, Sharon Gulick, Bonnie Peterson, John Gulick</p>	<p>What assets / resources are needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization of network • \$ and grant writing to continue • Survey existing programs (data)
<p>Across the region, local leaders and voices are crawlin’ out of the woodwork, working together successfully with “seasoned” voices, developing a “center” (network, virtual or otherwise) established that serves as a “go to” place for;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of local & stories that describe networking, collaboration & results • Info on learning opportunities (about what’s worked, engagement strategies, leadership & civic development, cultural interests) • To change the “narrative” to one of assets, possibilities & hope in the power & context of civic engagement & collaborative leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research across the region if/who such a “center” exists • Develop a prototype(s) of the kind(s) of stories we want • Begin to find the links/resources relevant • Seek organizations/coalitions having interest and capacity to host website/social network 	<p>Ann Hennen U of M extension-St Paul enne011@umn.edu; Joyce Hoelting – UMN Extension, St Paul jhoelting@umn.edu; Wilda Nilsestuen – Council of Rural Initiatives wilda@cri-wis.org; Carol Wetuski – USDA Rural Development WI carol.wetuski@wi.usda.gov; Rick</p>	<p>What assets / resources are needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to stories, writer, list of MN connections (Joyce) • Access to stories, trainer, WI list links to state offices (Wilda) portalwisconsin.org • Works with a lot of small rural communities, org’s & govt. (Carol) • Rural leader/volunteer – with experience, has a blog (Rick) • Access to educators/leadership alumni with stories; leadership development network; training/learning resources (Mary Ann)

<p>Create a culture of Entrepreneurship and develop a career pathway to move toward 20% of our new business started ups being by youth 25 years old or younger through the development of a model, pilot charter school with cross county collaboration (Wood & Juneau Co, WI for Entrepreneurship Charter School Pilot)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring together resources to help develop framework • Link Inventors & Entrepreneur networks to charter school concept development • Explore & assess charter school structures • Identify on financing – grants & foundations • Documenting the process/communication • Educate for & explore entrepreneurship curriculum in schools • Inventory of existing entrepreneurship programs, curriculum, approaches • Analyze and identify gaps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is the value or impact? ○ What are the desired outcomes? • Research on success stories and other • Explore designs of successful mentoring programs, particularly pending retirees with young entrepreneurs. 	<p>Terry Whipple co-contact, Connie Loden co-contact, Dennis Deery, Bonnie Peterson, Steve Hilgenberg, Sharon Gulick, Denise Spanjer, Joe Folsom, Norm Walzer, Cheryl Zimmy</p>	<p>What assets / resources are needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational • Financing • Network Building – Boy Scouts; Youth Groups; Jr. Achieve. FBLA • Those who can speak DPI Charter School Language • School District Support • Marketing – Internal & External • Technology • Tech Assistant Knowledge • Contact w/Sigorney as resources • Wisconsin Youth Entrepreneurship. Network – WEN; WIN • Job Shadows (business owners) • University Resources (Whitewater)
<p>Establish a Network of Rural & Urban Young Professional’s that collaborate & have a voice. Establish NEYP group. Bring SD into conversation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue conversations w/ND & host 1st NE summit in the fall 	<p>ND,NE & maybe SD, Denise Spanjer - Contact, NDYP Catherine Dalzell, Kayla Schnuelle</p>	

Work Area: Broadband

Just as “electrification of rural America” was a focus not too many years ago, broadband deployment and access is now a major development equalizer. If the rural areas of the country are to thrive, broadband access becomes critical. While many of the challenges of broadband are beyond the control of citizens, participants in this track will be working to help educate both providers and users.

Strategic Outcome	Action Steps	Who is working on it?	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate educational process to understand and overcome the barriers in public policy that prevent this from happening; Identify underserved areas Provide feedback and routine communication to industry providers to help identify areas lacking affordable, adequate service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify federal policies that create barriers to forming a critical mass of consumers in small communities State-wide map identifying underserved areas Research and partner w/ Link America, Connect IL, Rural Partners and Gov Broadband Group Research and secure federal funds Prepare a list of involved parties (providers, state agencies, NFP’s, others) and assemble supply maps as a means of determining the best approach to establish a collaboration network 	Marnie Werner – Center for Rural Policy & Development, MN mwerner@ruralmn.org ; Brenda Matherly – matherly@ifb.org , Diane Handley – handley@ifb.org , Dick Senese – dsenese@umn.edu , Jerry Townsend – jerrytownsend@yahoo.com , Arlene Scalzo – Arlene.Scalzo@wheada.com , Max Dulberger – max.dulberger@legis.wi.gov	
Focus on supply (available) services as well as demand & how services can be used.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn about and research a community area network applicable to rural (SW & far north) WI Learn about model networks like Grand Marais & Chippewa Valley Recruit local gov’t, schools, hospitals, universities, libraries, etc 	Arlene Scalzo – Arlene.Scalzo@wheada.com Max Dulberger – max.dulberger@legis.wi.gov	

Work Area: Other issues

Strategic Outcome	Action Steps	Who is working on it?	Notes
Regional information exchange that inspires people to act. Dynamic – land use /	Look for resources (Tim) t_collins@wiu.edu . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IA perspective (Dan) 	Tim Collins, Gary Becker, Sheldon, Tom, Verna, Dan Motto	

<p>conservation/ sustainability.</p>	<p>dmotto@Iastate.edu</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 call : On the commons.org (Verna) • Set up LinkedIn group (Gary) • Framework for what's happening in land use discussions (Sheldon & Tom) • Sustainability websites (Sheldon) • Rural Partners (Gary) 		
<p>Develop collaboration between University of-IL – RMED program & Native American Tribes in California & Wyoming to train tribal members to be Health Care Professionals to come back & serve their tribal community, recruiting 2 students per year beginning 2011</p>	<p>Hold conversations with Tribal representatives in Northern California, University of Illinois-Rockford National Center for Rural Health Professions to explore the potential interest and support for a partnership program to train doctors and other medical professionals to come back and serve their rural tribal community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and begin to develop the pipeline for recruiting students • Explore funding opportunities including scholarship contributions • Develop relationships and identify cultural support needs. 		