

Sustainable Community Development

Goal: Colorado State University will enhance its focus and depth in graduate education, applied research, and outreach in analyses related to sustainable community development and be recognized by municipal, county, state, and federal agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and citizens as a leading source of information and analysis promoting community development. This will include community impact analyses of economic activity, community organization for progress, evaluation of the drivers of local development, and workforce professional and personal development.

Purpose: Colorado communities are changing rapidly as a result of external influences, like loss of agricultural water, influx of retirement populations, development and demise of mineral extraction industries, changes in military deployments, and changes in cultural composition of residents. Communities struggle to develop and maintain resources: human, financial, physical, social, environmental, and political. They also are challenged to provide the organizational capacity to assess, plan, and implement activities to address resource development and management. These issues especially are acute in smaller rural communities. Colorado's communities are relatively unique in terms of sparse populations, a high natural amenity and public lands base, a transitory population, and relatively low public service provision. People in rural areas tend to be older, poorer, more likely to be uninsured, and less educated than their urban counterparts. Communities require knowledge to evaluate their resource base, their economic and social service alternatives, and their futures.

Strategic Actions:

- Coalesce the personnel resources in the rural community development area to create significant programs in rural tourism, public and private land use, alternative energy systems, contributions of rural finance to economic development, and workforce professional distance education opportunities.
- Work with multi-county, rural regions to assess opportunities and organization for future development.
- Develop relationships with the Colorado State University's Office of Economic Development and the School of Public Health to provide an outreach component for these enterprises.
- Develop Strategic partnerships with various groups, i.e. legislative relationship with Ken Salazar's office, Colorado Rural Development Council, etc.
- Develop a Center for Rural Development.
- Develop an earmark initiative of \$500,000 per year in the area of Rural Development.

Critical Resource Growth Needs:

- Generate small amounts of seed capital to initiate team efforts to assess opportunities and organization for rural regions.
- Assess best use of funds generated by community development research associate.
- Enhance grant resources in the areas of rural tourism development, and assistance and agency contracts for workforce development distance education.
- Develop in-service training for Extension agents.
- Provide resources to enhance public finance expertise, secure faculty position (endowed chair) in Rural Finance or Regional Development and expand capability in assessing the role of rural finance to economic development.
- Secure faculty position in regional/international development.

Personnel:

Administrative Advisor: Steve Davies

Steering Committee Chair(s): [Craig Bond](#) and [Andy Seidl](#)

Steering Committee Members: Jeff Ballweber, Dale Edward, Mike Tupa, CJ Mucklow, Dennis Kaan, Lou Swanson, James Pritchett, Martin Shields, Dawn Thilmany, Stephen Weiler