

Forest Summit: Rural Development
Councils (USDA)

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

ADVANTAGES OF STATE RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCILS
VS REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

- Statewide vs Regionwide emphasis (each State has unique situations/ circumstances)
- Existing mechanism through which an inter-agency coordination of programs and expenditures can occur.
- More State, local, and private participation (see listing of Council memberships)
- Monday Management Group made up of Federal agencies, etc., to oversee activities of Council - guarantees interagency coordination
- Already in place and ready to assume the lead coordination role
- Established forum for dialogue and consensus-building; means to address the various values involved
- Enhances coordination of efforts
- Organization Of The People not For The People

Attachment 3

**PARTICIPANTS IN THE MONDAY MANAGEMENT GROUP
AND STATE RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCILS**

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Rural Development Councils Remove Impediments to Development

Maine Farmers and South Dakota Towns Reap Benefits

National Initiative on Rural America

Federal, state, local, tribal
governments, and private sector
collaborating

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Rural Development Councils in Maine and South Dakota are demonstrating the value of overcoming barriers to rural development through cooperation and negotiation between federal and state levels. Working on different problems, Councils in both states have helped to resolve grass-roots concerns by creating opportunities for local citizens and federal agencies to work together on solving problems caused by excessive regulation.

In Maine, the issue arose when farmers seeking to diversify began to explore cranberry production, which has strong market potential. According to John Harker of the Maine Department of Agriculture, the farmers were poised at the beginning of a multi-million dollar agricultural development effort. They received support from several state agencies and the Maine legislature, which in 1991 established a state permitting process to allow cranberry production in low-value wetlands. But roadblocks appeared in the form of federal wetlands permit requirements.

In most cases, federal wetland regulations would have required "full blown individual permits for any proposed alterations of wetlands," reported Dean Bradshaw of the Maine Cranberry Growers Association. Data required for a permit for just one acre of low-value wetland would have cost an applicant between \$25,000 and \$100,000, with no assurances that the permit would be granted, Harker said. Small

family farmers simply could not satisfy the federal requirement, and the development of Maine's cranberry industry stood at an impasse.

Bernard Shaw, Maine's Commissioner of Agriculture and co-chair of the newly formed Maine Rural Development Council, brought the wetlands issue to the Council. In late March, 1992, the Council convened a meeting of the regional directors of the Environmental Protection Agency, Army Corps of Engineers, and Interior Department, with leaders of state agencies and potential cranberry growers. The discussion—open, direct, and spirited—surfaced the essential

permit, clearing the way for a revitalized cranberry industry in Maine.

According to Council co-chair Shaw, the cranberry breakthrough "demonstrates the Rural Development Council's role as rural development coordinator. We could bring together the regional administrators and the farmers and offer them the chance to develop a workable solution to a big problem. The Council facilitated the effort by months, perhaps even years."

For Sanford Blitz, EDA administrator and co-chair of the Maine Council, "the cranberry project is an example of the essence of the

"We acted as a catalyst to make a difference, and the folks in D.C. were ready to listen."

conflicts and persuaded the participants to establish a working committee, led by the Army Corps of Engineers. The Council charged the committee to establish a less costly permit process, protect federal agencies' oversight authority, and reduce duplication of federal and state permit application processes—all within six months.

In early July, 1992, the committee presented a draft general permit to all the agencies involved, and in August issued a public notice to gather public comment. In November, the Corps issued the new general

Maine Rural Development Council. Now we have one process for several state and federal agencies, and we developed it in a very short time." ■

A different problem led the South Dakota Rural Development Council to play a similar role. The Council removed a major financial impediment to a town's much-needed water project—and saved millions of dollars for towns across the country—by bringing the problem to the attention of the staff of the National Initiative on Rural America in Washington.

The town of Hecla, South Dakota, received a Community Facility loan of \$146,700 from Farmers Home Administration. With the loan, the town also received a requirement for an annual audit at a cost of more than \$4,500, even though other federal regulations already mandate community-wide audits. Over the life of the 40-year loan, Hecla would have spent over \$182,000 on audit costs, far more than the amount of the loan itself.

A frustrated staff member of the regional planning district brought the issue to South Dakota's newly formed Rural Development Council, which promptly applied a unique process for managing issues. After confirming FmHA's audit requirement, the Council's Review Committee accepted the issue, and the full Council agreed that as a federal impediment the issue needed to be referred to the Initiative's Monday Management Group in Washington.

To the delight of Jerry Wheeler, chair of South Dakota's Rural Development Council and executive director of the South Dakota Retail Merchants Association, the Monday Management Group was willing to deal with the problem. "I've gone to Washington before and received the 'bureaucratic hustle,'" Wheeler said, "but this time was different. The Council is a credible group. We acted as a catalyst to make a difference, and the folks in D.C. were ready to listen."

With the joint support of the state Council and the Initiative staff, FmHA decided to require no additional audits for communities with annual gross incomes of less than \$500,000. As a result, the town of Hecla has been spared prohibitive auditing costs for its water project loan. Even more significantly, USDA officials estimate that the FmHA decision may save communities more than \$400 million nationwide.

"Our Rural Development Council was created to handle just this type of problem," South

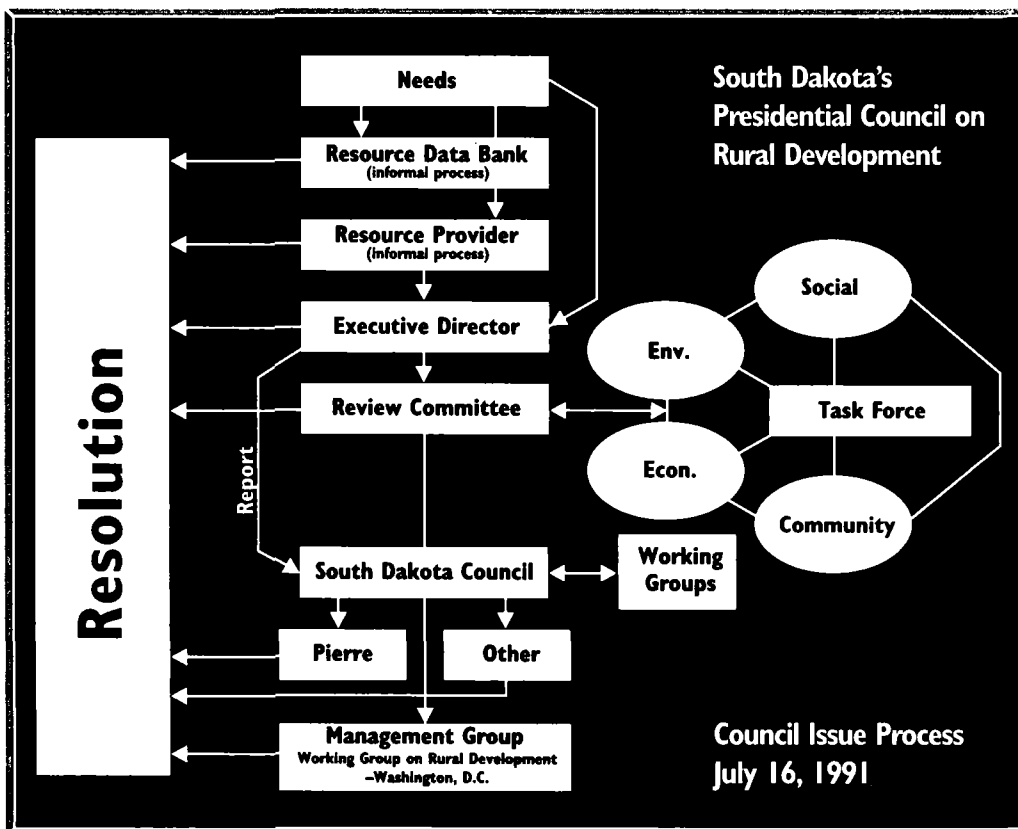
Dakota's Governor George S. Mickelson said. "Council members are committed to help untangle bureaucratic red tape so South Dakota's rural communities can prosper and better serve their citizens."

Council chair Jerry Wheeler agreed: "For years federal agencies have been encouraged to cooperate. Usually that meant tripling or quadrupling the work to be done, with three or four agencies maintaining their own separate procedures. Now the Rural Development Council can speak with one voice. We're not interested in finger-pointing; we're creating an environment of cooperation. We're here to try to build things, and that means first of all clearing away the barriers to rural development." ■

For further information about rural development efforts in Maine and South Dakota, please contact these persons—Maine: Robert Ho, Executive Director, 207 / 581-3192; South Dakota: Bob Hartford, Executive Director, 605 / 773-6001.

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In Brief



Rural Development Program

Contact: Tom Unruh, 202/624-8573 July 14, 1992

The Many Roles of the State Rural Development Council Executive Directors

State Rural Development Councils represent a new model of governance, developing new ways for government agencies at all levels to work together with the private sector to support more effectively the community and economic development efforts of rural communities. The councils' executive directors will bear much of the responsibility for the success or failure of individual state councils to reach this potential.

Traditionally, government's role in development has been to regulate and/or stimulate private sector activity. There is an increasing recognition that the public sector is unable to achieve economic development goals unilaterally. The council initiative is based on a developing understanding of a third role for government—to facilitate or catalyze coordinated public/private activity. The new governance model engages the public sector at the state, local, and federal levels with the private sector in collaborative approaches to economic and community development.

The councils are essentially informal assemblies of organizations and individuals that have responsibility for, or interest in, programs and policies that affect rural areas in the state. Their authority is limited. They are multi-jurisdictional. They do not allocate resources or deliver services. In short, they are voluntary coordinating committees structured to reflect the multiplicity of organizations involved in what is loosely called "rural development."

A council's success depends on the cooperative efforts of the right people with the right authority. Much can be achieved through simple communication and networking. As a council matures, it can facilitate more creative use of federal and state resources and regulatory discretion, and build the rationale for program and policy coordination that leads to changed practices, flexible application of regulations, and effective investment of development resources.

One of the most important decisions a council makes is the selection of an executive director. A council of essentially volunteers is limited in its potential without the support of someone who can do the follow-up work to move ideas and plans to implementation. With the full-time support and leadership of an executive

director, a council can undertake and implement complex and sophisticated strategies to improve services to rural areas.

The current federal rural development initiative is distinctive from other previous efforts in the small but strategic investment the federal government is making to provide each council with a senior-level executive director. The executive director is not employed by any agency — state or federal — but is hired by and reports to the council.

What does it take to be a successful executive director? The range of backgrounds and experience of the executive directors of the pilot states is varied, and demonstrates that there is no one set of qualifications that suffices to define the "ideal" executive director. The rural development initiative is still evolving. Executive directors must strive to fulfill the mission of the initiative and meet the particular needs of their council. However, over the past year, some fundamental roles and responsibilities of executive directors have become clear—roles that are critical to building a council into a cohesive, functioning group, able to analyze the state and local rural development needs as they relate to members of the council, and to take action to support the efforts of rural communities.

Convener

Creating the atmosphere necessary for a successful partnership often depends on the commitments made and the tone set initially by the Governor and the key federal contacts, in most cases well before an executive director is even hired. The executive director must work with the council's leadership to facilitate communication between the partners on the council and build a cohesive partnership around

a vision of successful rural communities in the state.

A council is composed of representatives of state government, federal government, local government, tribal government, and the private sector. Many council members do not automatically bring a comprehensive view of rural development to the council table. Many may be at the table to protect the interests of their organization; interagency or intergovernmental cooperation is not high on their agenda. Skepticism about even being there is common among new council members. An executive director's goal should be to maintain an atmosphere that, at the very least, is not threatening, and hopefully, encourages open discussion that can lead to better understanding, greater trust, and eventually, active collaboration.

One hoped-for goal of this initiative is to improve the performance of rural development policies and programs from the perspective of local people working to improve rural communities. An executive director should be empathetic to the people who are trying to make sense of federal and state delivery systems.

In the pilot councils, the first several meetings often consisted of general discussions about rural conditions in the state. Some people grew impatient because the council could not immediately focus on specific action items. Council members, leaders, and the executive directors all had to take the time to establish common understandings about rural development, think together about the potential for a new model of governance, and lay the foundation for future, more fruitful discussions about specific issues. The executive director is key to helping individual council members develop realistic expectations for the work of the

council and strengthen their commitment to continued participation.

Broker

The council executive director can be seen as a broker at the wholesale level of rural development services, working to build new relationships between the providers that will result in improvements at the retail level, where agencies actually deliver services to clients. As an executive director builds an understanding of the needs of rural communities for rural development services and the capabilities of the range of public and private resources available in the state, he or she can help council members and providers see opportunities for coordinated activities. There may be ways for agencies to leverage their resources, working toward new economies of scale, or coordinating service delivery to more effectively reach rural communities.

The general public often is frustrated by the seeming inability of government agencies to work together. Coordination seems so simple: why don't these people just talk to each other? Unfortunately, it's not so simple. Most organizations have focused narrowly on their legislated missions and have developed organizational identities around those missions. An executive director can create an atmosphere that is conducive to collaborative efforts to give these separate organizations an opportunity to have a dialogue that will lead to better coordination, or identify the barriers that hinder it.

Strategy Manager

To move the council from discussion to consensus and coordinated action, the executive director will need to discover and understand

personal and organizational agendas of council members. He will need to work with council members to reach areas of agreement and form joint commitments to action, both informally and through the council's workplan.

The executive director is the keeper of the plan, making the council productive in its considerations, and ensuring that action follows planning. It has been said that "strategic planning is a way to discipline the council process," to keep discussions moving toward action, and build the group's commitment to implementing its plans.

An executive director also can help manage the council's efforts by directing specific issues to the right audience. Issues brought to the attention of the council may involve federal agencies, national legislation, state agencies, state legislation, or local authorities. The executive director can make sure that the right people are involved, and move the council from discussion of the issue to negotiation and resolution.

Motivator

Maintaining the council's forward progress is the job of the executive director. Council activities would eventually stop without the constant attention of an executive director. Council morale, effectiveness, and vitality depend on respecting and augmenting the volunteered efforts of council members. The executive director will often need to work closely with task forces and working groups to keep them moving forward. From gentle reminders to simple logistics to obtaining that key bit of information, executive directors can help the council make the most of its time and effort.

Council Representative

In many cases, executive directors of the pilot councils have been the public representatives of the councils. Within the state, an executive director may be invited to speak to local and regional groups to explain the purpose of the national initiative and the role of the state rural development council.

As a council develops its workplan and begins to identify barriers or opportunities for collaborative action, the executive director may serve as an advocate for the objectives of the council. In a range of situations from public meetings to one-on-one sessions with agency executives, an executive director must explain and build support for the council's mission. Getting action on council action projects and barriers or opportunities identified as priorities by the council may require the executive director to meet with state-level agency directors, the initiatives Monday Management Group, and national offices of agencies and departments.

Investigator

As a council develops its workplan or examines specific issues, an executive director needs to work with council members to develop the background information necessary for council decision-making. Preparing detailed background information also will be necessary as councils work with the Monday Management Group for assistance in resolving issues at the national level.

Executive Secretary

The executive director serves as administrative staff to the council, overseeing the operations of the council, coordinating logistics for council

meetings, and maintaining the integrity of council finances. While this role is probably less important to achieving the council's substantive mission than the skills discussed above, competence in these areas will smooth the operation of the council. Limited staff assistance—and the non-federal nature of that assistance, in most cases—often requires an executive director to spend an inordinate amount of time on paperwork. Good organizational skills can help to minimize the time needed for these duties, leaving more time to do the work of building a strong and active council.

NGA RURAL DEVELOPMENT

NGA's work with the State Rural Development Councils is made possible through a grant from the Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce. For more information, contact Tom Unruh, 202/624-8573.

A Comprehensive Federal Response to Pacific Northwest Communities

Coordinating the investment of new and existing federal, state, and local resources to assist timber dependant communities of the Pacific Northwest (PNW) can best be accomplished through the existing State Rural Development Councils in Oregon and Washington. A similar organization can be created with the State of California to work with communities in Northern California. The SRDC's offer the following advantages.

- **A running start** -- In Oregon and Washington, SRDC members have two years of experience building new working relationships with each other and with rural communities. The councils have brought together the individuals and organizations necessary to implement broad local collaborative strategies.
- **The right people** -- The councils have brought together the individuals and organizations necessary to implement broad-based collaborative strategies. SRDC members in both states include state-level federal managers, state government policy level executives and administrators, local government officials, private sector business people, nonprofit organization directors, and tribal government officials.
- **A comprehensive long-term approach** -- SRDC members represent the complete range of program and policy areas that affect rural communities and citizens, including infrastructure finance, transportation, health, education, natural resource management, community and economic development, the arts, and others.
- **National-level support** -- The Washington, D.C. based Monday Management Group, made up of senior career managers, is in place to assist the SRDCs with program coordination at the national level and can help clear the way for coordinated implementation at the state and local level.
- **Coordinated, strategic investment** -- The councils provide program managers and administrators the opportunity to work with each other across agency and intergovernmental boundaries to effectively coordinate delivery of technical and financial assistance.
- **Focus on communities** -- Both councils have strong local government and private sector participation that has led state and federal council members to examine their systems for ways to improve operation of government programs, based on communities' knowledge of how the programs really work on the ground.
- **Improved access to federal, state, and, private sector resources** -- Both councils have specific task forces to improve access to development resources.
- **Trust and buy-in** -- The councils offer an open, mission-driven process that focuses members on the goal of healthy rural communities and not on organizational turf.

The combination of diverse public/private, intergovernmental membership, an open process for dialogue and collaborative action, as well as demonstrated commitment to the well being of rural communities gives the SRDCs real potential for developing innovative, flexible answers to the challenges that face the timber dependent communities of the Pacific Northwest.



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Maine Farmers and South Dakota Towns Reap Benefits

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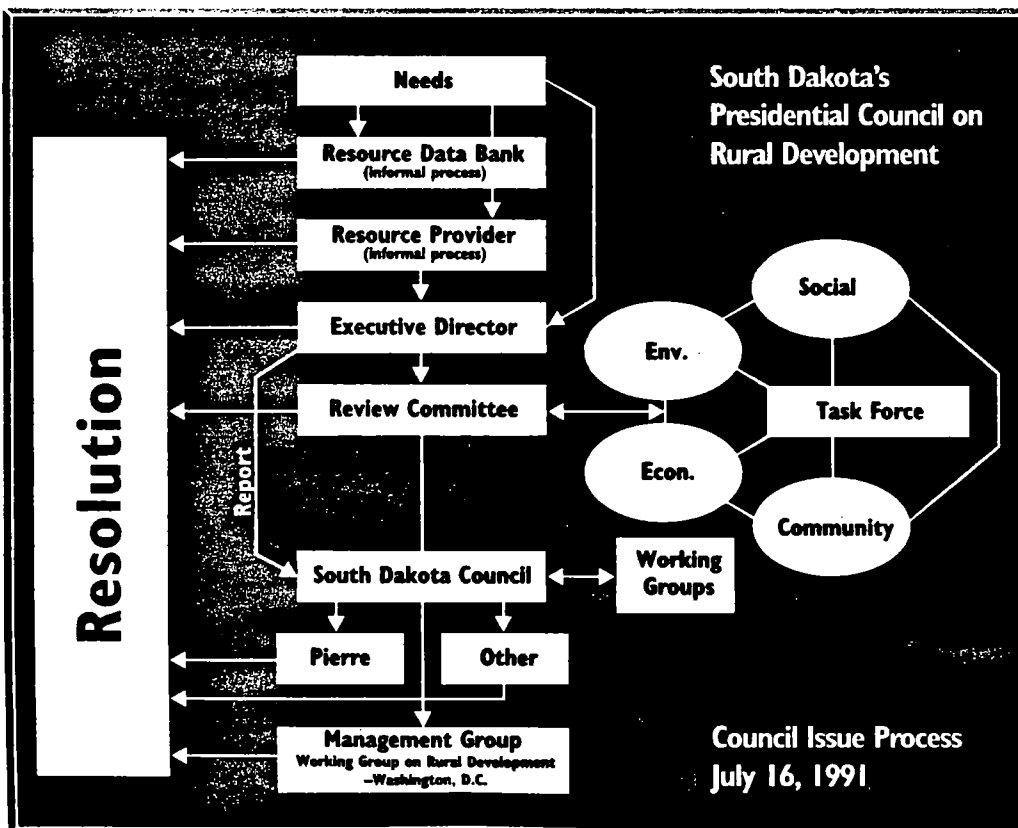
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In Brief



Rural Development Program

Contact: Tom Unruh, 202/624-8573 July 14, 1992

The Many Roles of the State Rural Development Council Executive Directors

State Rural Development Councils represent a new model of governance, developing new ways for government agencies at all levels to work together with the private sector to support more effectively the community and economic development efforts of rural communities. The councils' executive directors will bear much of the responsibility for the success or failure of individual state councils to reach this potential.

Traditionally, government's role in development has been to regulate and/or stimulate private sector activity. There is an increasing recognition that the public sector is unable to achieve economic development goals unilaterally. The council initiative is based on a developing understanding of a third role for government—to facilitate or catalyze coordinated public/private activity. The new governance model engages the public sector at the state, local, and federal levels with the private sector in collaborative approaches to economic and community development.

The councils are essentially informal assemblies of organizations and individuals that have responsibility for, or interest in, programs and policies that affect rural areas in the state. Their authority is limited. They are multi-jurisdictional. They do not allocate resources or deliver services. In short, they are voluntary coordinating committees structured to reflect the multiplicity of organizations involved in what is loosely called "rural development."

A council's success depends on the cooperative efforts of the right people with the right authority. Much can be achieved through simple communication and networking. As a council matures, it can facilitate more creative use of federal and state resources and regulatory discretion, and build the rationale for program and policy coordination that leads to changed practices, flexible application of regulations, and effective investment of development resources.

One of the most important decisions a council makes is the selection of an executive director. A council of essentially volunteers is limited in its potential without the support of someone who can do the follow-up work to move ideas and plans to implementation. With the full-time support and leadership of an executive

director, a council can undertake and implement complex and sophisticated strategies to improve services to rural areas.

The current federal rural development initiative is distinctive from other previous efforts in the small but strategic investment the federal government is making to provide each council with a senior-level executive director. The executive director is not employed by any agency — state or federal — but is hired by and reports to the council.

What does it take to be a successful executive director? The range of backgrounds and experience of the executive directors of the pilot states is varied, and demonstrates that there is no one set of qualifications that suffices to define the "ideal" executive director. The rural development initiative is still evolving. Executive directors must strive to fulfill the mission of the initiative and meet the particular needs of their council. However, over the past year, some fundamental roles and responsibilities of executive directors have become clear—roles that are critical to building a council into a cohesive, functioning group, able to analyze the state and local rural development needs as they relate to members of the council, and to take action to support the efforts of rural communities.

Convener

Creating the atmosphere necessary for a successful partnership often depends on the commitments made and the tone set initially by the Governor and the key federal contacts, in most cases well before an executive director is even hired. The executive director must work with the council's leadership to facilitate communication between the partners on the council and build a cohesive partnership around

a vision of successful rural communities in the state.

A council is composed of representatives of state government, federal government, local government, tribal government, and the private sector. Many council members do not automatically bring a comprehensive view of rural development to the council table. Many may be at the table to protect the interests of their organization; interagency or intergovernmental cooperation is not high on their agenda. Skepticism about even being there is common among new council members. An executive director's goal should be to maintain an atmosphere that, at the very least, is not threatening, and hopefully, encourages open discussion that can lead to better understanding, greater trust, and eventually, active collaboration.

One hoped-for goal of this initiative is to improve the performance of rural development policies and programs from the perspective of local people working to improve rural communities. An executive director should be empathetic to the people who are trying to make sense of federal and state delivery systems.

In the pilot councils, the first several meetings often consisted of general discussions about rural conditions in the state. Some people grew impatient because the council could not immediately focus on specific action items. Council members, leaders, and the executive directors all had to take the time to establish common understandings about rural development, think together about the potential for a new model of governance, and lay the foundation for future, more fruitful discussions about specific issues. The executive director is key to helping individual council members develop realistic expectations for the work of the

council and strengthen their commitment to continued participation.

Broker

The council executive director can be seen as a broker at the wholesale level of rural development services, working to build new relationships between the providers that will result in improvements at the retail level, where agencies actually deliver services to clients. As an executive director builds an understanding of the needs of rural communities for rural development services and the capabilities of the range of public and private resources available in the state, he or she can help council members and providers see opportunities for coordinated activities. There may be ways for agencies to leverage their resources, working toward new economies of scale, or coordinating service delivery to more effectively reach rural communities.

The general public often is frustrated by the seeming inability of government agencies to work together. Coordination seems so simple: why don't these people just talk to each other? Unfortunately, it's not so simple. Most organizations have focused narrowly on their legislated missions and have developed organizational identities around those missions. An executive director can create an atmosphere that is conducive to collaborative efforts to give these separate organizations an opportunity to have a dialogue that will lead to better coordination, or identify the barriers that hinder it.

Strategy Manager

To move the council from discussion to consensus and coordinated action, the executive director will need to discover and understand

personal and organizational agendas of council members. He will need to work with council members to reach areas of agreement and form joint commitments to action, both informally and through the council's workplan.

The executive director is the keeper of the plan, making the council productive in its considerations, and ensuring that action follows planning. It has been said that "strategic planning is a way to discipline the council process," to keep discussions moving toward action, and build the group's commitment to implementing its plans.

An executive director also can help manage the council's efforts by directing specific issues to the right audience. Issues brought to the attention of the council may involve federal agencies, national legislation, state agencies, state legislation, or local authorities. The executive director can make sure that the right people are involved, and move the council from discussion of the issue to negotiation and resolution.

Motivator

Maintaining the council's forward progress is the job of the executive director. Council activities would eventually stop without the constant attention of an executive director. Council morale, effectiveness, and vitality depend on respecting and augmenting the volunteered efforts of council members. The executive director will often need to work closely with task forces and working groups to keep them moving forward. From gentle reminders to simple logistics to obtaining that key bit of information, executive directors can help the council make the most of its time and effort.

Council Representative

In many cases, executive directors of the pilot councils have been the public representatives of the councils. Within the state, an executive director may be invited to speak to local and regional groups to explain the purpose of the national initiative and the role of the state rural development council.

As a council develops its workplan and begins to identify barriers or opportunities for collaborative action, the executive director may serve as an advocate for the objectives of the council. In a range of situations from public meetings to one-on-one sessions with agency executives, an executive director must explain and build support for the council's mission. Getting action on council action projects and barriers or opportunities identified as priorities by the council may require the executive director to meet with state-level agency directors, the initiatives Monday Management Group, and national offices of agencies and departments.

Investigator

As a council develops its workplan or examines specific issues, an executive director needs to work with council members to develop the background information necessary for council decision-making. Preparing detailed background information also will be necessary as councils work with the Monday Management Group for assistance in resolving issues at the national level.

Executive Secretary

The executive director serves as administrative staff to the council, overseeing the operations of the council, coordinating logistics for council

meetings, and maintaining the integrity of council finances. While this role is probably less important to achieving the council's substantive mission than the skills discussed above, competence in these areas will smooth the operation of the council. Limited staff assistance—and the non-federal nature of that assistance, in most cases—often requires an executive director to spend an inordinate amount of time on paperwork. Good organizational skills can help to minimize the time needed for these duties, leaving more time to do the work of building a strong and active council.

NGA RURAL DEVELOPMENT

NGA's work with the State Rural Development Councils is made possible through a grant from the Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce. For more information, contact Tom Unruh, 202/624-8573.



NATIONAL INITIATIVE ON RURAL AMERICA

-- NATIONAL MISSION AND GOAL STATEMENT* --

MISSION: Contribute to the vitality of the Nation by strengthening the ability of rural Americans to participate in determining their futures.

GOAL: To promote public/private collaborative¹ partnerships within an entrepreneurial environment for identifying and implementing innovative approaches to the social and economic problems of rural areas.

OBJECTIVES

I. Encourage the creation of collaborative relationships among federal, state, local, and tribal governments, and private and nonprofit organizations within each state², to foster and facilitate cooperation and to undertake a comprehensive strategic approach to rural development efforts within each state.

Strategy #1: Facilitate the development of working partnerships called State Rural Development Councils (SRDC) in the states, allowing for differences that reflect local preferences and regional diversity.

Strategy #2: Ensure that federal agencies are full partners in the SRDCs, and that they actively participate in ways appropriate for the Initiative and their agencies.

Strategy #3: Provide leadership and technical and financial assistance from existing federal agency sources to help support the organization and ongoing operation of the SRDCs.

Strategy #4: Provide policy guidance, technical assistance and strategic planning support to the SRDCs through the National Initiative Office and the support of contractors/consultants.

II. Encourage and support innovative approaches to rural development and the more effective resolution of rural development issues at all levels of government and within the private sector.

* This national mission and goal statement applies to the national level of the initiative only. Individual State Rural Development Councils are encouraged to adopt their own state-level mission statements.

Work on this statement was coordinated by the Monday Management Group's Mission and Goals Statement Task Force: Phil Hyatt, Tennessee Valley Authority (Chair), Les Thompson, Department of Education, Dick Gardner, Idaho Rural Development Council, Steve Bittel, Kansas Rural Development Council and Todd Landfried, USDA Extension Service.

Strategy #1: Assist in the implementation of SRDC action projects that demonstrate innovative, collaborative approaches involving all levels of government and the private sector.

Strategy #2: Encourage the application of new methods and technologies to the solution of rural development problems.

Strategy #3: Improve the targeting of federal rural development resources to achieve maximum impact on urgent rural development problems.

Strategy #4: Document and disseminate case studies of successful SRDC action projects.

Strategy #5: Promote the utilization of the Rural Information Center to assure that the benefits of successful rural development efforts and SRDC actions are widely shared across rural America.

Strategy #6: Encourage dialogue on rural development innovation and issues through communication among Initiative partnerships (e.g., national newsletter, national electronic network).

III. Create and maintain a cooperative national framework to support State Rural Development Councils and the National Initiative on Rural America.

Strategy #1: Establish and support an Executive Branch sub-Cabinet level Working Group on Rural Development consisting of top level policy decision-makers to provide oversight and facilitate implementation of the National Initiative.

Strategy #2: Establish and maintain an interagency group representing all federal agencies with active programs in rural America (the Monday Management Group--MMG), to coordinate the implementation of the National Initiative and to foster awareness of, and active participation in, the Initiative.

Strategy #3: Assign staff from cooperating federal departments and independent agencies to provide support in the implementation of the Initiative.

Strategy #4: Establish and support a communication process (especially a high-quality electronic communications network) to facilitate information exchange and networking among Initiative stakeholders at both the national and state levels, and among federal agencies and the SRDCs.

Strategy #5: Provide policy guidance, technical assistance (including research) and strategic planning support to SRDCs through the National Initiative Office and the support of contractors and consultants.

IV. Identify, resolve, or eliminate intergovernmental and interagency impediments, bureaucratic red tape, turf issues, language problems and other barriers that hinder effective rural development efforts.

Strategy #1: Develop and maintain through the MMG, in cooperation with the SRDCs, a mechanism by which the SRDCs can seek resolution of identified federal agency barriers and impediments to rural development and refer them to the MMG for consideration and action.

Strategy #2: Encourage all federal agencies, through the Policy Coordinating Group and MMG, to write or rewrite their regulations, standard operating procedures, and other communications in plain, user-friendly language, so that all customers can easily understand them without interpretation.

OPERATING PRINCIPLES

In implementing the National Initiative the following principles apply:

- Broad Representation and Nonpartisanship--The Initiative will be implemented in a nonpartisan manner. Each Council is asked to make its membership broad and representative of the economic, social and political diversity of the state. Projects and activities should be planned and implemented in the same manner.
- Collaborative Partnership--All five partners (Federal, State, local, Tribal, and private) are valued stakeholders and should be fully engaged in Council decisions with no partner dominating any of the other partners.
- State and Local Empowerment--Activities under the Initiative should empower and build the capacity of the states and the rural communities within the states to design unique responses to their own special rural development needs. They are encouraged to make local determinations of progress and selection of activities.
- Flexibility and Innovation--Participants in the SRDCs should be flexible and innovative in establishing new partnerships and trying fresh, new approaches to rural development issues. Responses to rural development should utilize different approaches to fit different situations.
- Federal Role--The role of the Federal government in implementing the Initiative should be that of a partner, coach and facilitator. Federal government agencies should be empowered to cooperate closely with the States as they implement the Initiative, providing them with the technical and administrative support needed to plan and implement tailored rural development strategies to meet local needs. Federal agencies are encouraged to delegate decision-making to lower levels.
- Private and Nonprofit Sector Roles--Private and nonprofit sector organizations should be full partners in the SRDCs and should be encouraged to cooperate with participating governmental organizations in developing innovative problem solving approaches.

► *For further information, contact the National Initiative Office (Bob Loran, 202/690-2394).* ◀

(1) The term "collaboration" is meant to indicate an attitude of working together as equals and with a sense of shared gains and/or losses as decisions are made and work completed.

(2) The use of the term "State" is meant to include both State and Territorial governments.

A Comprehensive Federal Response to Pacific Northwest Communities

Coordinating the investment of new and existing federal, state, and local resources to assist timber dependant communities of the Pacific Northwest (PNW) can best be accomplished through the existing State Rural Development Councils in Oregon and Washington. A similar organization can be created with the State of California to work with communities in Northern California. The SRDC's offer the following advantages.

- **A running start** -- In Oregon and Washington, SRDC members have two years of experience building new working relationships with each other and with rural communities. The councils have brought together the individuals and organizations necessary to implement broad local collaborative strategies.
- **The right people** -- The councils have brought together the individuals and organizations necessary to implement broad-based collaborative strategies. SRDC members in both states include state-level federal managers, state government policy level executives and administrators, local government officials, private sector business people, nonprofit organization directors, and tribal government officials.
- **A comprehensive long-term approach** -- SRDC members represent the complete range of program and policy areas that affect rural communities and citizens, including infrastructure finance, transportation, health, education, natural resource management, community and economic development, the arts, and others.
- **National-level support** -- The Washington, D.C. based Monday Management Group, made up of senior career managers, is in place to assist the SRDCs with program coordination at the national level and can help clear the way for coordinated implementation at the state and local level.
- **Coordinated, strategic investment** -- The councils provide program managers and administrators the opportunity to work with each other across agency and intergovernmental boundaries to effectively coordinate delivery of technical and financial assistance.
- **Focus on communities** -- Both councils have strong local government and private sector participation that has led state and federal council members to examine their systems for ways to improve operation of government programs, based on communities' knowledge of how the programs really work on the ground.
- **Improved access to federal, state, and, private sector resources** -- Both councils have specific task forces to improve access to development resources.
- **Trust and buy-in** -- The councils offer an open, mission-driven process that focuses members on the goal of healthy rural communities and not on organizational turf.

The combination of diverse public/private, intergovernmental membership, an open process for dialogue and collaborative action, as well as demonstrated commitment to the well being of rural communities gives the SRDCs real potential for developing innovative, flexible answers to the challenges that face the timber dependent communities of the Pacific Northwest.



February 1993

No. 1

Rural Development Councils Remove Impediments to Development

Maine Farmers and South Dakota Towns Reap Benefits

National Initiative on Rural America

Federal, state, local, tribal
governments, and private sector
collaborating

The Federal Partners

The Departments of
Agriculture
Commerce
Defense
Education
Health and Human Services
Housing and Urban Development
Interior
Labor
Transportation
Treasury
Veterans Affairs
Appalachian Regional
Commission
Environmental Protection Agency
National Endowment for the Arts
Small Business Administration
Tennessee Valley Authority

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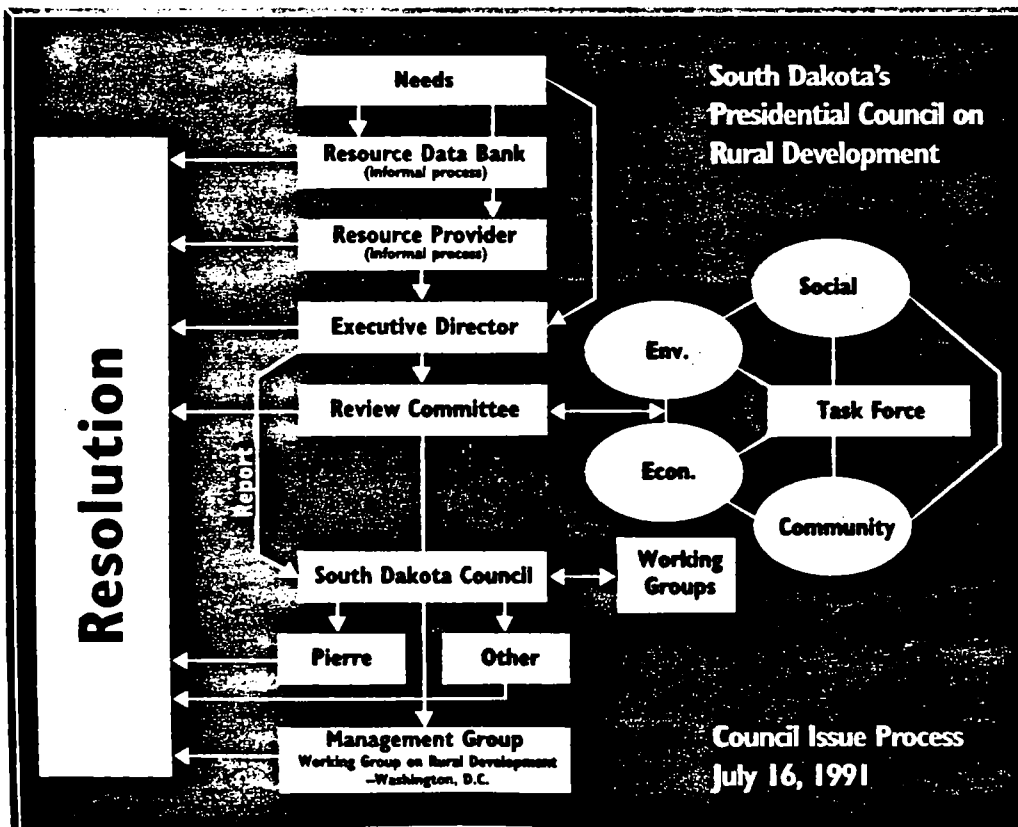
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Idaho Dick Gardner 208/334-3131	Ohio Bruce Benedict 614/752-9813
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Iowa Kathy Beery 515/242-4807	Pennsylvania Jessie Bloom 717/327-3435
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Montana Bob Heffner 406/444-4271	Wisconsin Dave Kluesner 608/266-7885
Nebraska Don Macke 402/471-6002	Wyoming Rick Hannicutt 307/777-6436



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Brief



Rural Development Program

Contact: Tom Unruh, 202/624-8573 July 14, 1992

The Many Roles of the State Rural Development Council Executive Directors

State Rural Development Councils represent a new model of governance, developing new ways for government agencies at all levels to work together with the private sector to support more effectively the community and economic development efforts of rural communities. The councils' executive directors will bear much of the responsibility for the success or failure of individual state councils to reach this potential.

Traditionally, government's role in development has been to regulate and/or stimulate private sector activity. There is an increasing recognition that the public sector is unable to achieve economic development goals unilaterally. The council initiative is based on a developing understanding of a third role for government—to facilitate or catalyze coordinated public/private activity. The new governance model engages the public sector at the state, local, and federal levels with the private sector in collaborative approaches to economic and community development.

The councils are essentially informal assemblies of organizations and individuals that have responsibility for, or interest in, programs and policies that affect rural areas in the state. Their authority is limited. They are multi-jurisdictional. They do not allocate resources or deliver services. In short, they are voluntary coordinating committees structured to reflect the multiplicity of organizations involved in what is loosely called "rural development."

A council's success depends on the cooperative efforts of the right people with the right authority. Much can be achieved through simple communication and networking. As a council matures, it can facilitate more creative use of federal and state resources and regulatory discretion, and build the rationale for program and policy coordination that leads to changed practices, flexible application of regulations, and effective investment of development resources.

One of the most important decisions a council makes is the selection of an executive director. A council of essentially volunteers is limited in its potential without the support of someone who can do the follow-up work to move ideas and plans to implementation. With the full-time support and leadership of an executive

director, a council can undertake and implement complex and sophisticated strategies to improve services to rural areas.

The current federal rural development initiative is distinctive from other previous efforts in the small but strategic investment the federal government is making to provide each council with a senior-level executive director. The executive director is not employed by any agency — state or federal — but is hired by and reports to the council.

What does it take to be a successful executive director? The range of backgrounds and experience of the executive directors of the pilot states is varied, and demonstrates that there is no one set of qualifications that suffices to define the "ideal" executive director. The rural development initiative is still evolving. Executive directors must strive to fulfill the mission of the initiative and meet the particular needs of their council. However, over the past year, some fundamental roles and responsibilities of executive directors have become clear—roles that are critical to building a council into a cohesive, functioning group, able to analyze the state and local rural development needs as they relate to members of the council, and to take action to support the efforts of rural communities.

Convener

Creating the atmosphere necessary for a successful partnership often depends on the commitments made and the tone set initially by the Governor and the key federal contacts, in most cases well before an executive director is even hired. The executive director must work with the council's leadership to facilitate communication between the partners on the council and build a cohesive partnership around

a vision of successful rural communities in the state.

A council is composed of representatives of state government, federal government, local government, tribal government, and the private sector. Many council members do not automatically bring a comprehensive view of rural development to the council table. Many may be at the table to protect the interests of their organization; interagency or intergovernmental cooperation is not high on their agenda. Skepticism about even being there is common among new council members. An executive director's goal should be to maintain an atmosphere that, at the very least, is not threatening, and hopefully, encourages open discussion that can lead to better understanding, greater trust, and eventually, active collaboration.

One hoped-for goal of this initiative is to improve the performance of rural development policies and programs from the perspective of local people working to improve rural communities. An executive director should be empathetic to the people who are trying to make sense of federal and state delivery systems.

In the pilot councils, the first several meetings often consisted of general discussions about rural conditions in the state. Some people grew impatient because the council could not immediately focus on specific action items. Council members, leaders, and the executive directors all had to take the time to establish common understandings about rural development, think together about the potential for a new model of governance, and lay the foundation for future, more fruitful discussions about specific issues. The executive director is key to helping individual council members develop realistic expectations for the work of the

council and strengthen their commitment to continued participation.

Broker

The council executive director can be seen as a broker at the wholesale level of rural development services, working to build new relationships between the providers that will result in improvements at the retail level, where agencies actually deliver services to clients. As an executive director builds an understanding of the needs of rural communities for rural development services and the capabilities of the range of public and private resources available in the state, he or she can help council members and providers see opportunities for coordinated activities. There may be ways for agencies to leverage their resources, working toward new economies of scale, or coordinating service delivery to more effectively reach rural communities.

The general public often is frustrated by the seeming inability of government agencies to work together. Coordination seems so simple: why don't these people just talk to each other? Unfortunately, it's not so simple. Most organizations have focused narrowly on their legislated missions and have developed organizational identities around those missions. An executive director can create an atmosphere that is conducive to collaborative efforts to give these separate organizations an opportunity to have a dialogue that will lead to better coordination, or identify the barriers that hinder it.

Strategy Manager

To move the council from discussion to consensus and coordinated action, the executive director will need to discover and understand

personal and organizational agendas of council members. He will need to work with council members to reach areas of agreement and form joint commitments to action, both informally and through the council's workplan.

The executive director is the keeper of the plan, making the council productive in its considerations, and ensuring that action follows planning. It has been said that "strategic planning is a way to discipline the council process," to keep discussions moving toward action, and build the group's commitment to implementing its plans.

An executive director also can help manage the council's efforts by directing specific issues to the right audience. Issues brought to the attention of the council may involve federal agencies, national legislation, state agencies, state legislation, or local authorities. The executive director can make sure that the right people are involved, and move the council from discussion of the issue to negotiation and resolution.

Motivator

Maintaining the council's forward progress is the job of the executive director. Council activities would eventually stop without the constant attention of an executive director. Council morale, effectiveness, and vitality depend on respecting and augmenting the volunteered efforts of council members. The executive director will often need to work closely with task forces and working groups to keep them moving forward. From gentle reminders to simple logistics to obtaining that key bit of information, executive directors can help the council make the most of its time and effort.

Council Representative

In many cases, executive directors of the pilot councils have been the public representatives of the councils. Within the state, an executive director may be invited to speak to local and regional groups to explain the purpose of the national initiative and the role of the state rural development council.

As a council develops its workplan and begins to identify barriers or opportunities for collaborative action, the executive director may serve as an advocate for the objectives of the council. In a range of situations from public meetings to one-on-one sessions with agency executives, an executive director must explain and build support for the council's mission. Getting action on council action projects and barriers or opportunities identified as priorities by the council may require the executive director to meet with state-level agency directors, the initiatives Monday Management Group, and national offices of agencies and departments.

Investigator

As a council develops its workplan or examines specific issues, an executive director needs to work with council members to develop the background information necessary for council decision-making. Preparing detailed background information also will be necessary as councils work with the Monday Management Group for assistance in resolving issues at the national level.

Executive Secretary

The executive director serves as administrative staff to the council, overseeing the operations of the council, coordinating logistics for council

meetings, and maintaining the integrity of council finances. While this role is probably less important to achieving the council's substantive mission than the skills discussed above, competence in these areas will smooth the operation of the council. Limited staff assistance—and the non-federal nature of that assistance, in most cases—often requires an executive director to spend an inordinate amount of time on paperwork. Good organizational skills can help to minimize the time needed for these duties, leaving more time to do the work of building a strong and active council.

NGA RURAL DEVELOPMENT

NGA's work with the State Rural Development Councils is made possible through a grant from the Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce. For more information, contact Tom Unruh, 202/624-8573.



NATIONAL INITIATIVE ON RURAL AMERICA

-- NATIONAL MISSION AND GOAL STATEMENT* --

MISSION: Contribute to the vitality of the Nation by strengthening the ability of rural Americans to participate in determining their futures.

GOAL: To promote public/private collaborative¹ partnerships within an entrepreneurial environment for identifying and implementing innovative approaches to the social and economic problems of rural areas.

OBJECTIVES

I. Encourage the creation of collaborative relationships among federal, state, local, and tribal governments, and private and nonprofit organizations within each state², to foster and facilitate cooperation and to undertake a comprehensive strategic approach to rural development efforts within each state.

Strategy #1: Facilitate the development of working partnerships called State Rural Development Councils (SRDC) in the states, allowing for differences that reflect local preferences and regional diversity.

Strategy #2: Ensure that federal agencies are full partners in the SRDCs, and that they actively participate in ways appropriate for the Initiative and their agencies.

Strategy #3: Provide leadership and technical and financial assistance from existing federal agency sources to help support the organization and ongoing operation of the SRDCs.

Strategy #4: Provide policy guidance, technical assistance and strategic planning support to the SRDCs through the National Initiative Office and the support of contractors/consultants.

II. Encourage and support innovative approaches to rural development and the more effective resolution of rural development issues at all levels of government and within the private sector.

* This national mission and goal statement applies to the national level of the initiative only. Individual State Rural Development Councils are encouraged to adopt their own state-level mission statements.

Strategy #1: Assist in the implementation of SRDC action projects that demonstrate innovative, collaborative approaches involving all levels of government and the private sector.

Strategy #2: Encourage the application of new methods and technologies to the solution of rural development problems.

Strategy #3: Improve the targeting of federal rural development resources to achieve maximum impact on urgent rural development problems.

Strategy #4: Document and disseminate case studies of successful SRDC action projects.

Strategy #5: Promote the utilization of the Rural Information Center to assure that the benefits of successful rural development efforts and SRDC actions are widely shared across rural America.

Strategy #6: Encourage dialogue on rural development innovation and issues through communication among Initiative partnerships (e.g., national newsletter, national electronic network).

III. Create and maintain a cooperative national framework to support State Rural Development Councils and the National Initiative on Rural America.

Strategy #1: Establish and support an Executive Branch sub-Cabinet level Working Group on Rural Development consisting of top level policy decision-makers to provide oversight and facilitate implementation of the National Initiative.

Strategy #2: Establish and maintain an interagency group representing all federal agencies with active programs in rural America (the Monday Management Group--MMG), to coordinate the implementation of the National Initiative and to foster awareness of, and active participation in, the Initiative.

Strategy #3: Assign staff from cooperating federal departments and independent agencies to provide support in the implementation of the Initiative.

Strategy #4: Establish and support a communication process (especially a high-quality electronic communications network) to facilitate information exchange and networking among Initiative stakeholders at both the national and state levels, and among federal agencies and the SRDCs.

Strategy #5: Provide policy guidance, technical assistance (including research) and strategic planning support to SRDCs through the National Initiative Office and the support of contractors and consultants.

IV. Identify, resolve, or eliminate intergovernmental and interagency impediments, bureaucratic red tape, turf issues, language problems and other barriers that hinder effective rural development efforts.

Strategy #1: Develop and maintain through the MMG, in cooperation with the SRDCs, a mechanism by which the SRDCs can seek resolution of identified federal agency barriers and impediments to rural development and refer them to the MMG for consideration and action.

Strategy #2: Encourage all federal agencies, through the Policy Coordinating Group and MMG, to write or rewrite their regulations, standard operating procedures, and other communications in plain, user-friendly language, so that all customers can easily understand them without interpretation.

OPERATING PRINCIPLES

In implementing the National Initiative the following principles apply:

- Broad Representation and Nonpartisanship--The Initiative will be implemented in a nonpartisan manner. Each Council is asked to make its membership broad and representative of the economic, social and political diversity of the state. Projects and activities should be planned and implemented in the same manner.
- Collaborative Partnership--All five partners (Federal, State, local, Tribal, and private) are valued stakeholders and should be fully engaged in Council decisions with no partner dominating any of the other partners.
- State and Local Empowerment--Activities under the Initiative should empower and build the capacity of the states and the rural communities within the states to design unique responses to their own special rural development needs. They are encouraged to make local determinations of progress and selection of activities.
- Flexibility and Innovation--Participants in the SRDCs should be flexible and innovative in establishing new partnerships and trying fresh, new approaches to rural development issues. Responses to rural development should utilize different approaches to fit different situations.
- Federal Role--The role of the Federal government in implementing the Initiative should be that of a partner, coach and facilitator. Federal government agencies should be empowered to cooperate closely with the States as they implement the Initiative, providing them with the technical and administrative support needed to plan and implement tailored rural development strategies to meet local needs. Federal agencies are encouraged to delegate decision-making to lower levels.
- Private and Nonprofit Sector Roles--Private and nonprofit sector organizations should be full partners in the SRDCs and should be encouraged to cooperate with participating governmental organizations in developing innovative problem solving approaches.

► *For further information, contact the National Initiative Office (Bob Loran, 202/690-2394).* ◄

(1) The term "collaboration" is meant to indicate an attitude of working together as equals and with a sense of shared gains and/or losses as decisions are made and work completed.

(2) The use of the term "State" is meant to include both State and Territorial governments.



Working Together Works

State Rural Development Councils Achieve Early Successes through Collaboration

National Initiative on Rural America

Federal, state, local, tribal
governments, and private sector
collaborating

The Federal Partners

The Departments of:
Agriculture
Commerce
Defense
Education

Health and Human Services
Housing and Urban Development
Interior
Labor
Transportation
Treasury
Veterans Affairs

Appalachian Regional
Commission

Environmental Protection Agency
National Endowment for the Arts
Small Business Administration
Tennessee Valley Authority



Linda Harbaugh
Public Affairs Task Force Chair
U.S. Travel & Tourism
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Tony Tighe
Steering Committee Chair
National Endowment for the Arts
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202 / 690-2394



Published by
National Rural Economic
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University of Wisconsin-
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Newly formed Rural Development Councils tell remarkable success stories about their initial progress in the National Initiative on Rural America. The Initiative is a federal effort to "reinvent government" by creating partnerships in each state among state, federal, local, and tribal governments and private organizations (profit and non-profit) involved in rural development.

Eight state councils were established in 1991 in the "pilot states," including Kansas, Maine, Mississippi, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, and Washington. In their initial phase, the Councils chart their direction, identify a core of leaders, and create opportunities for members to become acquainted as agency heads and as individuals committed to rural development.

"Newly formed Councils bring people together in new relationships," said Bob Lovan, director of the National Initiative Office in Washington D.C. "Just having the chance to talk together about rural problems often leads Council members to cooperate in new ways." Below are examples of early Council accomplishments from several pilot states:

In **Oregon**, the state Fish and Wildlife Department and the federal Economic Development Administration funded a plan to

restore Tillamook Bay, a major estuary system on Oregon's northern coast. Developed by local citizens with the help of Oregon State University and the state Coastal Zone Management Association, the restoration plan itself marked an achievement by embodying agreements among industrial and environmental interests.

"The Council held a meeting at Tillamook Bay where local citi-

zens demonstrated the quality of the plan," said Ron Fox, an executive at PacifiCorp and chair of the Oregon Council. "That was the catalyst that led us to nominate Tillamook Bay to the National Estuary Program."

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**"Just having the chance to talk together
about rural problems often leads Council
members to cooperate in new ways."**

the state's widening of Highway 25—but had to ensure an adequate water treatment system.

The SC Rural Development Council saw an opportunity. More than 20 members of the Councils convened with local groups, and together they proposed a single regional waste water system that can expand as new industries are attracted to the area. With funding from five state and federal agencies totalling \$4.3 million, according to Pat Dixon of the Economic Development Administration and Council member, "the Highway 25 area is taking a phenomenal leap forward in its development. Edgefield County had about everything it needed to grow, and now it will have an adequate waste water treatment capacity, too."

In Mississippi, "the poultry business was about to come to a

required financial assistance. Council members had the opportunity to support the entire poultry system in Mississippi. Spradling reported that 14 banks are now involved—"a perfect demonstration of what can happen when state, federal, and private partners work out problems together," he said.

"We're creating jobs in small rural businesses all across the state," Spradling concluded. "That's what a Rural Development Council in the '90s is all about."

Eighteen additional state Councils—from Alaska to Florida, from New Mexico to Vermont—are now forming and represent the initial expansion of the Initiative. Capitalizing on the pilot states' experiences, the expansion Councils are working to "reinvent government" in rural

"We recognized that there was a problem and we agreed to work it out."

screeching halt," said Jack Spradling of the Small Business Administration and chair of the Mississippi Council. The Council's challenge was to support the poultry industry in a short time without excessive red tape. The Small Business Administration, Farmers Home Administration, and the state Business Finance Corporation met with local bankers, poultry growers, and processors. "We recognized that there was a problem and we agreed to work it out," said Spradling.

The Council learned that a large new processing plant and feed mill required 150 new poultry growers, and these entrepreneurs

development, based on wholly new and comprehensive partnerships.

Beyond the eight pilot state Councils and the 18 Councils now being formed, 20 additional states are beginning to schedule initial formation meetings between their governors and the Initiative Office. In the next six months at least 46 states will be in various stages of Council development. The Initiative Office hopes to involve all 55 states and territories eventually. ■

For further information about the National Initiative on Rural Development, contact the Initiative Office in Washington, D.C., telephone 202 / 690-2394.

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February 1993
No. 1

Rural Development Councils Remove Impediments to Development

Maine Farmers and South Dakota Towns Reap Benefits

National Initiative on Rural America

Federal, state, local, tribal
governments, and private sector
collaborating

The Federal Partners

The Departments of:
Agriculture
Commerce
Defense
Education

Health and Human Services
Housing and Urban Development
Interior
Labor
Transportation
Treasury
Veterans Affairs

Appalachian Regional
Commission
Environmental Protection Agency
National Endowment for the Arts
Small Business Administration
Tennessee Valley Authority

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Published by
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Rural Development Councils in Maine and South Dakota are demonstrating the value of overcoming barriers to rural development through cooperation and negotiation between federal and state levels. Working on different problems, Councils in both states have helped to resolve grass-roots concerns by creating opportunities for local citizens and federal agencies to work together on solving problems caused by excessive regulation.

In Maine, the issue arose when farmers seeking to diversify began to explore cranberry production, which has strong market potential. According to John Harker of the Maine Department of Agriculture, the farmers were poised at the beginning of a multi-million dollar agricultural development effort. They received support from several state agencies and the Maine legislature, which in 1991 established a state permitting process to allow cranberry production in low-value wetlands. But road-blocks appeared in the form of federal wetlands permit requirements.

In most cases, federal wetland regulations would have required "full blown individual permits for any proposed alterations of wetlands," reported Dean Bradshaw of the Maine Cranberry Growers Association. Data required for a permit for just one acre of low-value wetland would have cost an applicant between \$25,000 and \$100,000, with no assurances that the permit would be granted, Harker said. Small

family farmers simply could not satisfy the federal requirement, and the development of Maine's cranberry industry stood at an impasse.

Bernard Shaw, Maine's Commissioner of Agriculture and co-chair of the newly formed Maine Rural Development Council, brought the wetlands issue to the Council. In late March, 1992, the Council convened a meeting of the regional directors of the Environmental Protection Agency, Army Corps of Engineers, and Interior Department, with leaders of state agencies and potential cranberry growers. The discussion—open, direct, and spirited—surfaced the essential

permit, clearing the way for a revitalized cranberry industry in Maine.

According to Council co-chair Shaw, the cranberry breakthrough "demonstrates the Rural Development Council's role as rural development coordinator. We could bring together the regional administrators and the farmers and offer them the chance to develop a workable solution to a big problem. The Council facilitated the effort by months, perhaps even years."

For Sanford Blitz, EDA administrator and co-chair of the Maine Council, "the cranberry project is an example of the essence of the

"We acted as a catalyst to make a difference, and the folks in D.C. were ready to listen."

conflicts and persuaded the participants to establish a working committee, led by the Army Corps of Engineers. The Council charged the committee to establish a less costly permit process, protect federal agencies' oversight authority, and reduce duplication of federal and state permit application processes—all within six months.

In early July, 1992, the committee presented a draft general permit to all the agencies involved, and in August issued a public notice to gather public comment. In November, the Corps issued the new general

Maine Rural Development Council. Now we have one process for several state and federal agencies, and we developed it in a very short time." ■

A different problem led the South Dakota Rural Development Council to play a similar role. The Council removed a major financial impediment to a town's much-needed water project—and saved millions of dollars for towns across the country—by bringing the problem to the attention of the staff of the National Initiative on Rural America in Washington.

The town of Hecla, South Dakota, received a Community Facility loan of \$146,700 from Farmers Home Administration. With the loan, the town also received a requirement for an annual audit at a cost of more than \$4,500, even though other federal regulations already mandate community-wide audits. Over the life of the 40-year loan, Hecla would have spent over \$182,000 on audit costs, far more than the amount of the loan itself.

A frustrated staff member of the regional planning district brought the issue to South Dakota's newly formed Rural Development Council, which promptly applied a unique process for managing issues. After confirming FmHA's audit requirement, the Council's Review Committee accepted the issue, and the full Council agreed that as a federal impediment the issue needed to be referred to the Initiative's Monday Management Group in Washington.

To the delight of Jerry Wheeler, chair of South Dakota's Rural Development Council and executive director of the South Dakota Retail Merchants Association, the Monday Management Group was willing to deal with the problem. "I've gone to Washington before and received the 'bureaucratic hustle,'" Wheeler said, "but this time was different. The Council is a credible group. We acted as a catalyst to make a difference, and the folks in D.C. were ready to listen."

With the joint support of the state Council and the Initiative staff, FmHA decided to require no additional audits for communities with annual gross incomes of less than \$500,000. As a result, the town of Hecla has been spared prohibitive auditing costs for its water project loan. Even more significantly, USDA officials estimate that the FmHA decision may save communities more than \$400 million nationwide.

"Our Rural Development Council was created to handle just this type of problem," South

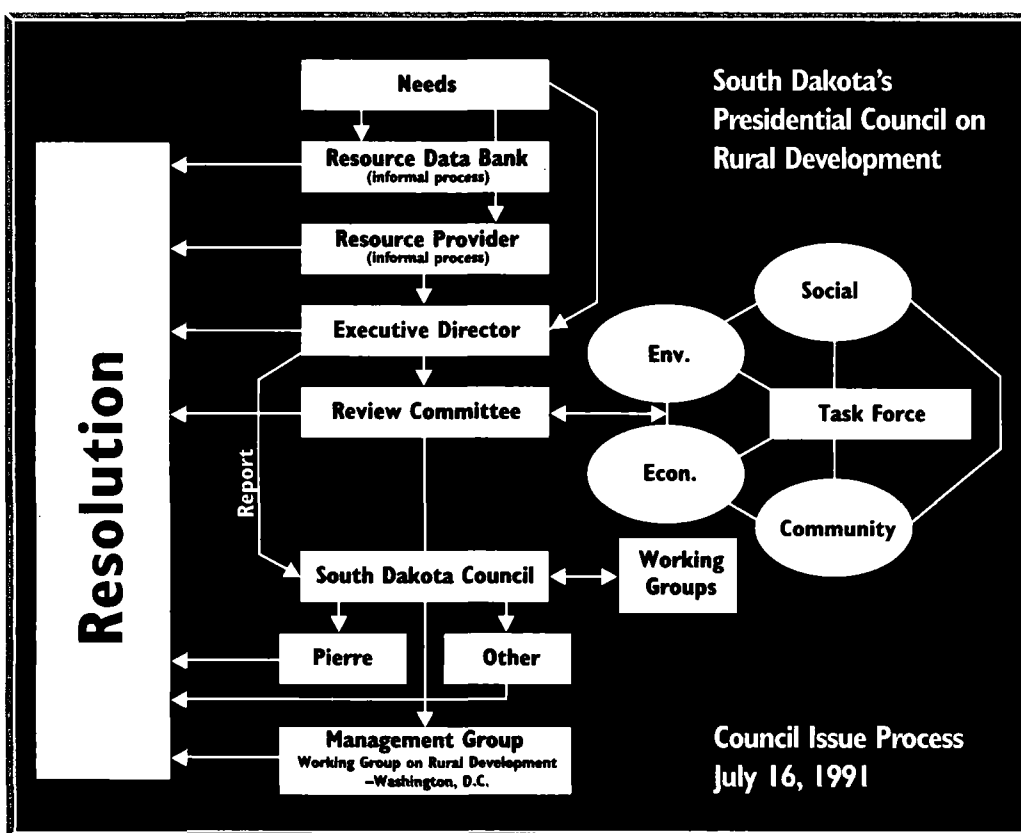
Dakota's Governor George S. Mickelson said. "Council members are committed to help untangle bureaucratic red tape so South Dakota's rural communities can prosper and better serve their citizens."

Council chair Jerry Wheeler agreed: "For years federal agencies have been encouraged to cooperate. Usually that meant tripling or quadrupling the work to be done, with three or four agencies maintaining their own separate procedures. Now the Rural Development Council can speak with one voice. We're not interested in finger-pointing; we're creating an environment of cooperation. We're here to try to build things, and that means first of all clearing away the barriers to rural development." ■

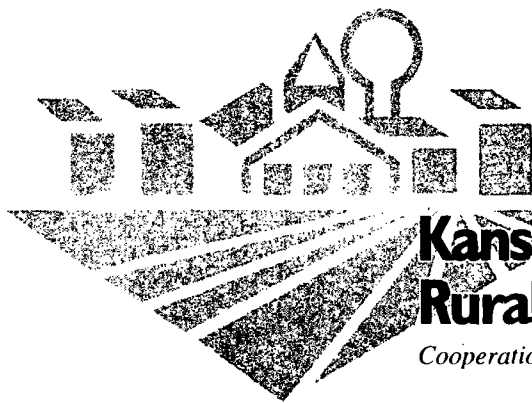
For further information about rural development efforts in Maine and South Dakota, please contact these persons—Maine: Robert Ho, Executive Director, 207 / 581-3192; South Dakota: Bob Hartford, Executive Director, 605 / 773-6001.

Representatives

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February 1993
No. 2

Kansas Council Clears the Way for Rural Development Agency

Cooperation Removes Impediments to Growth

National Initiative on Rural America

Federal, state, local, tribal
governments, and private sector
collaborating

The Federal Partners

The Departments of:
Agriculture
Commerce
Defense
Education
Health and Human Services
Housing and Urban Development
Interior
Labor
Transportation
Treasury
Veterans Affairs

Appalachian Regional
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Environmental Protection Agency
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Two rural development projects in Kansas demonstrate the power of a state Rural Development Council to identify and resolve troublesome issues facing rural businesses and towns.

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Working Together Works

State Rural Development Councils Achieve Early Successes through Collaboration

National Initiative on Rural America

Federal, state, local, tribal
governments, and private sector
collaborating

The Federal Partners

The Departments of:
Agriculture
Commerce
Defense
Education

Health and Human Services
Housing and Urban Development
Interior
Labor

Transportation
Treasury
Veterans Affairs

Appalachian Regional
Commission

Environmental Protection Agency
National Endowment for the Arts
Small Business Administration
Tennessee Valley Authority



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U.S. Travel & Tourism
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Published by
National Rural Economic
Development Institute
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Newly formed Rural Development Councils tell remarkable success stories about their initial progress in the National Initiative on Rural America. The Initiative is a federal effort to "reinvent government" by creating partnerships in each state among state, federal, local, and tribal governments and private organizations (profit and non-profit) involved in rural development.

Eight state councils were established in 1991 in the "pilot states," including Kansas, Maine, Mississippi, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, and Washington. In their initial phase, the Councils chart their direction, identify a core of leaders, and create opportunities for members to become acquainted as agency heads and as individuals committed to rural development.

"Newly formed Councils bring people together in new relationships," said Bob Lovan, director of the National Initiative Office in Washington D.C. "Just having the chance to talk together about rural problems often leads Council members to cooperate in new ways." Below are examples of early Council accomplishments from several pilot states:

In **Oregon**, the state Fish and Wildlife Department and the federal Economic Development Administration funded a plan to

restore Tillamook Bay, a major estuary system on Oregon's northern coast. Developed by local citizens with the help of Oregon State University and the state Coastal Zone Management Association, the restoration plan itself marked an achievement by embodying agreements among industrial and environmental interests.

"The Council held a meeting at Tillamook Bay where local citi-

zens demonstrated the quality of the plan," said Ron Fox, an executive at PacifiCorp and chair of the Oregon Council. "That was the catalyst that led us to nominate Tillamook Bay to the National Estuary Program."

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the state's widening of Highway 25—but had to ensure an adequate water treatment system.

The SC Rural Development Council saw an opportunity. More than 20 members of the Councils convened with local groups, and together they proposed a single regional waste water system that can expand as new industries are attracted to the area. With funding from five state and federal agencies totalling \$4.3 million, according to Pat Dixon of the Economic Development Administration and Council member, "the Highway 25 area is taking a phenomenal leap forward in its development. Edgefield County had about everything it needed to grow, and now it will have an adequate waste water treatment capacity, too."

In Mississippi, "the poultry business was about to come to a

required financial assistance. Council members had the opportunity to support the entire poultry system in Mississippi. Spradling reported that 14 banks are now involved—"a perfect demonstration of what can happen when state, federal, and private partners work out problems together," he said.

"We're creating jobs in small rural businesses all across the state," Spradling concluded. "That's what a Rural Development Council in the '90s is all about."

Eighteen additional state Councils—from Alaska to Florida, from New Mexico to Vermont—are now forming and represent the initial expansion of the Initiative. Capitalizing on the pilot states' experiences, the expansion Councils are working to "reinvent government" in rural

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"We recognized that there was a problem and we agreed to work it out."

screaming halt," said Jack Spradling of the Small Business Administration and chair of the Mississippi Council. The Council's challenge was to support the poultry industry in a short time without excessive red tape. The Small Business Administration, Farmers Home Administration, and the state Business Finance Corporation met with local bankers, poultry growers, and processors. "We recognized that there was a problem and we agreed to work it out," said Spradling.

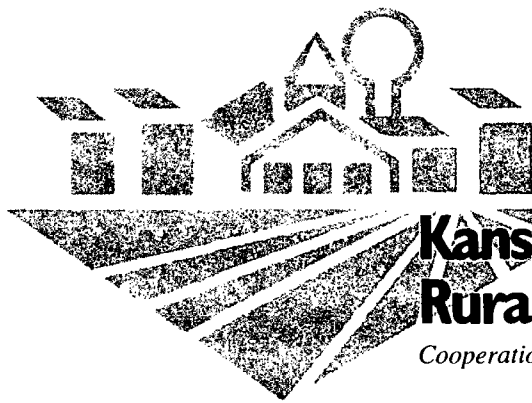
The Council learned that a large new processing plant and feed mill required 150 new poultry growers, and these entrepreneurs

development, based on wholly new and comprehensive partnerships.

Beyond the eight pilot state Councils and the 18 Councils now being formed, 20 additional states are beginning to schedule initial formation meetings between their governors and the Initiative Office. In the next six months at least 46 states will be in various stages of Council development. The Initiative Office hopes to involve all 55 states and territories eventually. ■

For further information about the National Initiative on Rural Development, contact the Initiative Office in Washington, D.C., telephone 202 / 690-2394.

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February 1993
No. 2

Kansas Council Clears the Way for Rural Development Agency

Cooperation Removes Impediments to Growth

National Initiative on Rural America

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Commerce
Defense
Education

Health and Human Services
Housing and Urban Development
Interior
Labor
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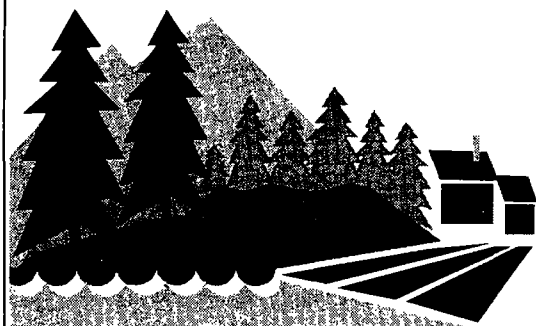
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RURAL Connections

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE MAINE RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

VOLUME 1 No. 1 AUGUST, 1992

ROBERT P. HO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

VIEWPOINT: A FORUM FOR VIEWS ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN MAINE



Reinventing of Government

By: Sanford Blitz

*Economic Development Representative
U.S. Department of Commerce
Federal Co-Chair, MRDC*

"THIS MAY BE THE SECOND COMING OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION." "PERESTROIKA IS FOR EVERYONE." "WE MUST CHANGE OUR WAY OF THINKING, FROM A 'CATEGORICAL MENTALITY' TO A 'CONSEQUENTIAL MENTALITY.'" These "revolutionary" words were spoken by very prominent persons associated with the White House Rural Development Initiative at conferences I attended as the federal co-chair of the Maine Rural Development Council (MRDC). While no one was actually advocating revolution with these thoughts, the speakers used provocative phrases to illustrate, what I believe to be from a federal perspective, the essence of the Rural Development Initiative and the work of the State Rural Development Councils: to fundamentally change the way government, at all levels, does business; to empower bureaucracies and people with the ability to identify problems, and the authority and responsibility

continued on page 3



Overview of Maine Rural Development

By: Bernard Shaw

*Commissioner Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources
State Co-Chair, MRDC*

Maine provides a great opportunity for the newly organized Maine Rural Development Council (MRDC) and its partnership of state and federal membership under the Presidential Rural Development Initiative. This partnership has the potential to bring state and federal support to local initiatives on an extremely quick time frame. Although Maine has traditionally been dependent on its natural resources base, its citizens have many more needs and must diversify by developing new skills and applying those skills to newly developed jobs.

It is my belief that the MRDC must seek out the needs of communities in an effort to bring their desires to the forefront. When this happens, the door is open for the local, state and federal parties to work together in a multi-partnership.

This provides an unprecedented opportunity for rural areas to adapt to the rapidly changing market, whether it

continued on page 7

Welcome to the first issue of *Rural Connections*. This is your newsletter, and our hope is that, with your help, it can be a useful forum for communication and productive debate across the state among rural citizens and development professionals alike.

As "connections," the newsletter is also intended as an instrument of the Council's mission. Simply stated, this mission is to serve as an effective catalytic agent, or mechanism, for collaboration among agencies and organizations in the development community and help them problem-solve strategically and in partnership. The end goal is a strengthened and viable rural Maine as we move into the 21st Century.

Robert P. Ho

Robert P. Ho,
Executive Director

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Rural Development Program

Contact: Tom Unruh, 202/624-8573 July 14, 1992

The Many Roles of the State Rural Development Council Executive Directors

State Rural Development Councils represent a new model of governance, developing new ways for government agencies at all levels to work together with the private sector to support more effectively the community and economic development efforts of rural communities. The councils' executive directors will bear much of the responsibility for the success or failure of individual state councils to reach this potential.

Traditionally, government's role in development has been to regulate and/or stimulate private sector activity. There is an increasing recognition that the public sector is unable to achieve economic development goals unilaterally. The council initiative is based on a developing understanding of a third role for government—to facilitate or catalyze coordinated public/private activity. The new governance model engages the public sector at the state, local, and federal levels with the private sector in collaborative approaches to economic and community development.

The councils are essentially informal assemblies of organizations and individuals that have responsibility for, or interest in, programs and policies that affect rural areas in the state. Their authority is limited. They are multi-jurisdictional. They do not allocate resources or deliver services. In short, they are voluntary coordinating committees structured to reflect the multiplicity of organizations involved in what is loosely called "rural development."

A council's success depends on the cooperative efforts of the right people with the right authority. Much can be achieved through simple communication and networking. As a council matures, it can facilitate more creative use of federal and state resources and regulatory discretion, and build the rationale for program and policy coordination that leads to changed practices, flexible application of regulations, and effective investment of development resources.

One of the most important decisions a council makes is the selection of an executive director. A council of essentially volunteers is limited in its potential without the support of someone who can do the follow-up work to move ideas and plans to implementation. With the full-time support and leadership of an executive

director, a council can undertake and implement complex and sophisticated strategies to improve services to rural areas.

The current federal rural development initiative is distinctive from other previous efforts in the small but strategic investment the federal government is making to provide each council with a senior-level executive director. The executive director is not employed by any agency — state or federal — but is hired by and reports to the council.

What does it take to be a successful executive director? The range of backgrounds and experience of the executive directors of the pilot states is varied, and demonstrates that there is no one set of qualifications that suffices to define the "ideal" executive director. The rural development initiative is still evolving. Executive directors must strive to fulfill the mission of the initiative and meet the particular needs of their council. However, over the past year, some fundamental roles and responsibilities of executive directors have become clear—roles that are critical to building a council into a cohesive, functioning group, able to analyze the state and local rural development needs as they relate to members of the council, and to take action to support the efforts of rural communities.

Convener

Creating the atmosphere necessary for a successful partnership often depends on the commitments made and the tone set initially by the Governor and the key federal contacts, in most cases well before an executive director is even hired. The executive director must work with the council's leadership to facilitate communication between the partners on the council and build a cohesive partnership around

a vision of successful rural communities in the state.

A council is composed of representatives of state government, federal government, local government, tribal government, and the private sector. Many council members do not automatically bring a comprehensive view of rural development to the council table. Many may be at the table to protect the interests of their organization; interagency or intergovernmental cooperation is not high on their agenda. Skepticism about even being there is common among new council members. An executive director's goal should be to maintain an atmosphere that, at the very least, is not threatening, and hopefully, encourages open discussion that can lead to better understanding, greater trust, and eventually, active collaboration.

One hoped-for goal of this initiative is to improve the performance of rural development policies and programs from the perspective of local people working to improve rural communities. An executive director should be empathetic to the people who are trying to make sense of federal and state delivery systems.

In the pilot councils, the first several meetings often consisted of general discussions about rural conditions in the state. Some people grew impatient because the council could not immediately focus on specific action items. Council members, leaders, and the executive directors all had to take the time to establish common understandings about rural development, think together about the potential for a new model of governance, and lay the foundation for future, more fruitful discussions about specific issues. The executive director is key to helping individual council members develop realistic expectations for the work of the

council and strengthen their commitment to continued participation.

Broker

The council executive director can be seen as a broker at the wholesale level of rural development services, working to build new relationships between the providers that will result in improvements at the retail level, where agencies actually deliver services to clients. As an executive director builds an understanding of the needs of rural communities for rural development services and the capabilities of the range of public and private resources available in the state, he or she can help council members and providers see opportunities for coordinated activities. There may be ways for agencies to leverage their resources, working toward new economies of scale, or coordinating service delivery to more effectively reach rural communities.

The general public often is frustrated by the seeming inability of government agencies to work together. Coordination seems so simple: why don't these people just talk to each other? Unfortunately, it's not so simple. Most organizations have focused narrowly on their legislated missions and have developed organizational identities around those missions. An executive director can create an atmosphere that is conducive to collaborative efforts to give these separate organizations an opportunity to have a dialogue that will lead to better coordination, or identify the barriers that hinder it.

Strategy Manager

To move the council from discussion to consensus and coordinated action, the executive director will need to discover and understand

personal and organizational agendas of council members. He will need to work with council members to reach areas of agreement and form joint commitments to action, both informally and through the council's workplan.

The executive director is the keeper of the plan, making the council productive in its considerations, and ensuring that action follows planning. It has been said that "strategic planning is a way to discipline the council process," to keep discussions moving toward action, and build the group's commitment to implementing its plans.

An executive director also can help manage the council's efforts by directing specific issues to the right audience. Issues brought to the attention of the council may involve federal agencies, national legislation, state agencies, state legislation, or local authorities. The executive director can make sure that the right people are involved, and move the council from discussion of the issue to negotiation and resolution.

Motivator

Maintaining the council's forward progress is the job of the executive director. Council activities would eventually stop without the constant attention of an executive director. Council morale, effectiveness, and vitality depend on respecting and augmenting the volunteered efforts of council members. The executive director will often need to work closely with task forces and working groups to keep them moving forward. From gentle reminders to simple logistics to obtaining that key bit of information, executive directors can help the council make the most of its time and effort.

Council Representative

In many cases, executive directors of the pilot councils have been the public representatives of the councils. Within the state, an executive director may be invited to speak to local and regional groups to explain the purpose of the national initiative and the role of the state rural development council.

As a council develops its workplan and begins to identify barriers or opportunities for collaborative action, the executive director may serve as an advocate for the objectives of the council. In a range of situations from public meetings to one-on-one sessions with agency executives, an executive director must explain and build support for the council's mission. Getting action on council action projects and barriers or opportunities identified as priorities by the council may require the executive director to meet with state-level agency directors, the initiatives Monday Management Group, and national offices of agencies and departments.

Investigator

As a council develops its workplan or examines specific issues, an executive director needs to work with council members to develop the background information necessary for council decision-making. Preparing detailed background information also will be necessary as councils work with the Monday Management Group for assistance in resolving issues at the national level.

Executive Secretary

The executive director serves as administrative staff to the council, overseeing the operations of the council, coordinating logistics for council

meetings, and maintaining the integrity of council finances. While this role is probably less important to achieving the council's substantive mission than the skills discussed above, competence in these areas will smooth the operation of the council. Limited staff assistance—and the non-federal nature of that assistance, in most cases—often requires an executive director to spend an inordinate amount of time on paperwork. Good organizational skills can help to minimize the time needed for these duties, leaving more time to do the work of building a strong and active council.

NGA RURAL DEVELOPMENT

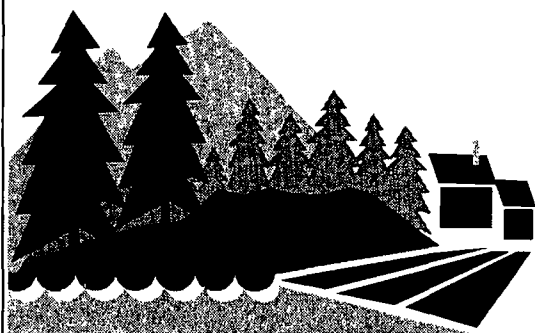
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RURAL Connections

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE MAINE RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

VOLUME 1 No. 1 AUGUST, 1992

ROBERT P. HO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

VIEWPOINT: A FORUM FOR VIEWS ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN MAINE



Reinventing of Government

By: Sanford Blitz

*Economic Development Representative
U.S. Department of Commerce
Federal Co-Chair, MRDC*

"THIS MAY BE THE SECOND COMING OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION." "PERESTROIKA IS FOR EVERYONE." "WE MUST CHANGE OUR WAY OF THINKING, FROM A 'CATEGORICAL MENTALITY' TO A 'CONSEQUENTIAL MENTALITY.'" These "revolutionary" words were spoken by very prominent persons associated with the White House Rural Development Initiative at conferences I attended as the federal co-chair of the Maine Rural Development Council (MRDC). While no one was actually advocating revolution with these thoughts, the speakers used provocative phrases to illustrate, what I believe to be from a federal perspective, the essence of the Rural Development Initiative and the work of the State Rural Development Councils: to fundamentally change the way government, at all levels, does business; to empower bureaucracies and people with the ability to identify problems, and the authority and responsibility

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Overview of Maine Rural Development

By: Bernard Shaw

*Commissioner Maine Department of
Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources
State Co-Chair, MRDC*

Maine provides a great opportunity for the newly organized Maine Rural Development Council (MRDC) and its partnership of state and federal membership under the Presidential Rural Development Initiative. This partnership has the potential to bring state and federal support to local initiatives on an extremely quick time frame. Although Maine has traditionally been dependent on its natural resources base, its citizens have many more needs and must diversify by developing new skills and applying those skills to newly developed jobs.

It is my belief that the MRDC must seek out the needs of communities in an effort to bring their desires to the forefront. When this happens, the door is open for the local, state and federal parties to work together in a multi-partnership.

This provides an unprecedented opportunity for rural areas to adapt to the rapidly changing market, whether it

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Welcome to the first issue of *Rural Connections*. This is your newsletter, and our hope is that, with your help, it can be a useful forum for communication and productive debate across the state among rural citizens and development professionals alike.

As "connections," the newsletter is also intended as an instrument of the Council's mission. Simply stated, this mission is to serve as an effective catalytic agent, or mechanism, for collaboration among agencies and organizations in the development community and help them problem-solve strategically and in partnership. The end goal is a strengthened and viable rural Maine as we move into the 21st Century.

Robert P. Ho,
Executive Director

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NATIONAL INITIATIVE ON RURAL AMERICA

-- NATIONAL MISSION AND GOAL STATEMENT* --

MISSION: Contribute to the vitality of the Nation by strengthening the ability of rural Americans to participate in determining their futures.

GOAL: To promote public/private collaborative¹ partnerships within an entrepreneurial environment for identifying and implementing innovative approaches to the social and economic problems of rural areas.

OBJECTIVES

I. Encourage the creation of collaborative relationships among federal, state, local, and tribal governments, and private and nonprofit organizations within each state², to foster and facilitate cooperation and to undertake a comprehensive strategic approach to rural development efforts within each state.

Strategy #1: Facilitate the development of working partnerships called State Rural Development Councils (SRDC) in the states, allowing for differences that reflect local preferences and regional diversity.

Strategy #2: Ensure that federal agencies are full partners in the SRDCs, and that they actively participate in ways appropriate for the Initiative and their agencies.

Strategy #3: Provide leadership and technical and financial assistance from existing federal agency sources to help support the organization and ongoing operation of the SRDCs.

Strategy #4: Provide policy guidance, technical assistance and strategic planning support to the SRDCs through the National Initiative Office and the support of contractors/consultants.

II. Encourage and support innovative approaches to rural development and the more effective resolution of rural development issues at all levels of government and within the private sector.

* This national mission and goal statement applies to the national level of the initiative only. Individual State Rural Development Councils are encouraged to adopt their own state-level mission statements.

Strategy #1: Assist in the implementation of SRDC action projects that demonstrate innovative, collaborative approaches involving all levels of government and the private sector.

Strategy #2: Encourage the application of new methods and technologies to the solution of rural development problems.

Strategy #3: Improve the targeting of federal rural development resources to achieve maximum impact on urgent rural development problems.

Strategy #4: Document and disseminate case studies of successful SRDC action projects.

Strategy #5: Promote the utilization of the Rural Information Center to assure that the benefits of successful rural development efforts and SRDC actions are widely shared across rural America.

Strategy #6: Encourage dialogue on rural development innovation and issues through communication among Initiative partnerships (e.g., national newsletter, national electronic network).

III. Create and maintain a cooperative national framework to support State Rural Development Councils and the National Initiative on Rural America.

Strategy #1: Establish and support an Executive Branch sub-Cabinet level Working Group on Rural Development consisting of top level policy decision-makers to provide oversight and facilitate implementation of the National Initiative.

Strategy #2: Establish and maintain an interagency group representing all federal agencies with active programs in rural America (the Monday Management Group--MMG), to coordinate the implementation of the National Initiative and to foster awareness of, and active participation in, the Initiative.

Strategy #3: Assign staff from cooperating federal departments and independent agencies to provide support in the implementation of the Initiative.

Strategy #4: Establish and support a communication process (especially a high-quality electronic communications network) to facilitate information exchange and networking among Initiative stakeholders at both the national and state levels, and among federal agencies and the SRDCs.

Strategy #5: Provide policy guidance, technical assistance (including research) and strategic planning support to SRDCs through the National Initiative Office and the support of contractors and consultants.

IV. Identify, resolve, or eliminate intergovernmental and interagency impediments, bureaucratic red tape, turf issues, language problems and other barriers that hinder effective rural development efforts.

Strategy #1: Develop and maintain through the MMG, in cooperation with the SRDCs, a mechanism by which the SRDCs can seek resolution of identified federal agency barriers and impediments to rural development and refer them to the MMG for consideration and action.

Strategy #2: Encourage all federal agencies, through the Policy Coordinating Group and MMG, to write or rewrite their regulations, standard operating procedures, and other communications in plain, user-friendly language, so that all customers can easily understand them without interpretation.

OPERATING PRINCIPLES

In implementing the National Initiative the following principles apply:

- Broad Representation and Nonpartisanship--The Initiative will be implemented in a nonpartisan manner. Each Council is asked to make its membership broad and representative of the economic, social and political diversity of the state. Projects and activities should be planned and implemented in the same manner.
- Collaborative Partnership--All five partners (Federal, State, local, Tribal, and private) are valued stakeholders and should be fully engaged in Council decisions with no partner dominating any of the other partners.
- State and Local Empowerment--Activities under the Initiative should empower and build the capacity of the states and the rural communities within the states to design unique responses to their own special rural development needs. They are encouraged to make local determinations of progress and selection of activities.
- Flexibility and Innovation--Participants in the SRDCs should be flexible and innovative in establishing new partnerships and trying fresh, new approaches to rural development issues. Responses to rural development should utilize different approaches to fit different situations.
- Federal Role--The role of the Federal government in implementing the Initiative should be that of a partner, coach and facilitator. Federal government agencies should be empowered to cooperate closely with the States as they implement the Initiative, providing them with the technical and administrative support needed to plan and implement tailored rural development strategies to meet local needs. Federal agencies are encouraged to delegate decision-making to lower levels.
- Private and Nonprofit Sector Roles--Private and nonprofit sector organizations should be full partners in the SRDCs and should be encouraged to cooperate with participating governmental organizations in developing innovative problem solving approaches.

► *For further information, contact the National Initiative Office (Bob Lovan, 202/690-2394).* ◀

(1) The term "collaboration" is meant to indicate an attitude of working together as equals and with a sense of shared gains and/or losses as decisions are made and work completed.

(2) The use of the term "State" is meant to include both State and Territorial governments.