



Best Practices 1999



Rural Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities

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Executive Summary

This compilation of best practices, drawn largely from the 1999 annual reports of rural Empowerment Zones (EZ), Enterprise Communities (EC), Rural Economic Area Partnership (REAP) Zones, and Champion Communities (CC), represents a collection of good ideas that have been tested in practice. It differs from traditional compilations, which frequently describe effective ways of addressing particular social and economic challenges, such as business development, housing, health care, job training, and transportation. Because this volume is concerned with the process of community empowerment—a very different and more comprehensive objective than attacking individual programmatic challenges—its focus is on ways rural communities have chosen to achieve empowerment for themselves.

As a result, the practices shown below are organized around themes that reflect some of the issues that must be addressed to achieve community empowerment: These themes are shown neither in order of importance nor in the order they must be addressed; rather, they appear alphabetically. Specific best practices are listed within the appropriate category along with the name of the community from which they come. For the most part, these best practices are compiled from the 1999 annual reports of EZs, ECs, CCs, and REAP Zones, though some have been added from other sources, including the experience of the author.

Administrative Capacity	3
Building Sustainable Programs	11
Citizen Participation	42
Combining Funding Sources.....	56
Creating and Celebrating “Wins”	60
Governance.....	64
Leadership Development.....	72
Monitoring and Evaluating Strategic Plans.....	77
Partnerships	93

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The report is also available on the EZ/EC Web site: www.ezec.gov

Administrative Capacity

Beadle-Spink Enterprise Community

funding sustainability revolving loan funds

Beadle and Spink Enterprise Community (South Dakota) operates revolving loan programs offering low interest loans in four major areas: housing, business, live-stock, and rural development projects. The revolving loan program is diversified so that all sectors of the community may benefit from this designation. In addition, the revolving loans are helping put the EC on a self-sustaining basis. While some EZ/EC's are desperately trying to find administrative support to continue with their respective strategic plans Beadle-Spink used the bulk of its EZ/EC (SSBG) funds for the revolving loan program, using only the interest received from the loans to cover administrative costs.

Moloka`i Enterprise Community

staff administrative funding technical assistance partnerships administrative procedures

The Moloka`i Enterprise Community (Hawaii) board determined very early that adequate administrative support is critical to successful implementation of the strategic plan. Working with its lead administrative entity, the Molokai Community Service Council (MCSC), the board helped to raise \$279,650 to cover administrative expenses for the first year of operations. Fifteen percent of the annual EC grant was dedicated to partially cover operational costs. Using these funds, MCSC has rented adequate office space, hired 3.5 full-time equivalent employees, and upgraded its computerized bookkeeping system. These efforts were aided by the Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC), a western regional non-profit organization that received funds from Bank of America to provide technical assistance to rural non-profits. RCAC assisted MCSC with an internal financial management review and provided suggestions on improving MCSC's system. MCSC also recently became one of 68 partners with the largest community development financial intermediary in the country, Rural LISC (Low-Income Sustainable Communities). Rural LISC will also help to provide technical and capacity-building support for MCSC so that it can administer the EC's strategic plan implementation more effectively.

East Prairie Enterprise Community

lead entity independence autonomy

East Prairie Enterprise Community (Missouri) made the transition from being a program of a parent organization to having its own independent corporation. This was a tremendous accomplishment for the EC's lead entity, a rural grassroots community-based family support organization. As the grassroots organization evolved, the independent status assures that community need is the cornerstone of all service activities. As a result of the new incorporation, new partnerships resulted in increased job connection services to residents of the EC and the surrounding area.

New programs in 1999 include designation as a Workforce One Stop Satellite. Susanna Wesley Family Learning Center, Inc., formerly known as Epworth Bootheel Family Learning Center, served over 700 families in 1999 in child care, youth development, adult learning and job connections. The center, founded in 1992 by community residents and always located in East Prairie, Missouri, began with \$250,000 in local donations with a mission of building healthy families. Consistent even now with current welfare reform legislation, the mission is accomplished by providing a nurturing environment for children while assisting the development of skills which promote self-supported economic independence.

Williamsburg/Lake County Enterprise Community

operations management practices self-sustaining community support

Williamsburg/Lake County Enterprise Community (South Carolina) was under a USDA Rural Development mandate to create efficient accounting methods for daily operation, benchmarking, and program fiscal management. This requirement has led the community to work with a smaller staff to work more efficiently. An extensive State Internal Review (SIR) by USDA laid out the many changes needed in the community's operations, and resulted in personnel policy changes, fiscal policy management revisions and by-law changes. At mid-year, the EC lost all their senior staff workers and all but closed its doors. However, they were able to make the change because the reduction came at the end of the changes mandated by the SIR. The new staff were just as capable, or in some cases more so, in critical areas. Their dedication and willingness to work for an agency which was going through a day-by-day existence endeared them to the community and local leadership.

Program or seed funds had been what the agency used primarily to obtain community support. The EZ/EC grants which were previously obtained had been accepted as established and when many of those programs could not continued to be funded because monies designated had already been spent, community support evaporated and citizens stopped paying attention to the EC. Now, however, many of those programs have gotten additional funding and are again providing services. The benefit of having almost nothing to work from allowed the current staff the opportunity to create innovative ways to get things done.

The forced streamlining made management more responsible for personnel and funds. By targeting projects one at a time and sequencing events that interrelate, persons could serve in various jobs and not be overwhelmed and get the task accomplished. The downside. However, is that people are operating at levels that strain their capacity and which in time will lead to resignations and turnover. A key to solving this is capable volunteers, and people taking the time to invest in their own community. The EZ/EC funds are only the beginning; solutions must be people-based. If board and steering committee members work to achieve benchmark goals, the EC will continue to grow and obtain wider community support. The EC will attempt to obtain grants and other funding to be used to educate the community on topics such as rural capacity building and volunteerism.

Business integrity is vital to any business, but is essential for a non-profit such as the EC. Earlier in 2000 they began two-employee outreach programs designed to educate residents of their programs and increase census tract registration. Board and steering committee members attended local tract meetings to listen to residents' concerns about race and economic conditions in the county. Unlike previous board meetings of strife and arguments, board meetings are now conducted professionally with goal and agendas in mind.

This change was due in part because of board training conducted by Rural Development and others. Training and unity of effort, along with individuals' honesty and commitment, have gone a long way to re-establish the EC's credibility in the community.

In the EC's immediate future is the need to complete the investigatory audit. This will determine what funds are available for future use for all purposes. Continuing to educate the board about community development, creating Individual Development Account (IDA) funds and developing a strong homebuyers counseling program will do much for the Enterprise Community. It will provide investment training so as to earn profit for the future use by the organization.

Clare County Enterprise Community

staff

The Clare County Enterprise Community (Michigan) hired an executive director and within the first few months of 2000, developed a fully operational office. In addition to the executive director, the plan calls for a full time secretary and 3 AmeriCorps VISTA workers. Each VISTA worker will be assigned to a section of benchmarks and will work with benchmark leaders and champions to bring these benchmarks to fruition.

Bowling Green Enterprise Community

administrative services

The administrative oversight and day-to-day management of the Bowling Green Enterprise Community (Kentucky) is done by contract with the City of Bowling Green for a flat \$50,000 per year fee. This contract allows for a chief executive officer, administrative assistant, and provides all office space, supplies, equipment, staff travel and resources necessary for the full operation of our EC. If the contract did not exist, the Bowling Green EC would incur many additional expenses related to management and have far fewer funds for allocation to program needs benefiting our residents.

Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone

funding startup operating expenses

The Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone (SIDEZ) would not have been able to survive financially without its partners during its first year of operation. Each of the three counties made donations of up to \$10,000 to the Zone. The Mayor of Cairo initiated a fund-raising campaign in his community that resulted in \$10,000 in donations from local government, labor, non-profit organizations and the private sector. The City of Cairo contributed \$231 a month toward health benefits for the Executive Director. Other local governments, corporations and organizations throughout the Zone contributed money to help pay start-up costs. The State of Illinois granted SIDEZ \$19,000 to help pay the salary of the Executive Director. State Representative Jim Fowler sponsored a legislative initiative to secure \$50,000 for SIDEZ, which will be disbursed in 2000.

Josephine County Enterprise Community

teams project champions implementation accountability

Josephine County Enterprise Community (Oregon) found that identifying project "champions" for each project proved to be a critical action for effective project implementation. A "champion" is responsible for keeping the project on schedule by holding the project partners accountable to tasks they have taken on. The project "champion" is also responsible for convening partner and project meetings.

Austin Rural Enterprise Community

administrative plan startup

Austin Rural Enterprise Community's (Indiana) plan for implementing its strategy to achieve community empowerment includes the following actions:

- Plan implementation and progress monitoring
- Translate strategy elements to specific action steps and assign responsibilities, timelines and budgets
- Monitor EC funding programs, coordinate identified potential funding with appropriate entities and assist with applications as appropriate
- Identify and mobilize both financial and non financial resources
- Make development sustainable
- Adapt strategies and plan
- Build community capacity
- Advise the AREC Board of progress and recommend revisions to plan element benchmarks as needed
- Reconvene all subcommittees and review the first year's progress and conduct public input sessions to receive input on the coming year's program
- Enhance and sustain community momentum and address inertia of public enthusiasm
- Organize community for implementation phase and mobilize strategy

- development committees
- Expand citizen participation beyond the committee structure for every project and plan element
- Reinforce community and public's shared vision and strategy
- Organize and sponsor special events (e.g., chili suppers, youth events) for information dissemination and targeting public
- Develop quarterly newsletter
- Arrange monthly editorial in local newsletter

Austin Rural Enterprise Community

alternative funding sources

The intended purpose of USDA RD annual EC funding is to provide designated EC Communities funding for leverage of other funds and to initiate sustainable activities. With over \$40 Million in projects to address, AREC, Inc. must be creative and carefully allocate this limited funding to activities that will perpetuate sustainability and leverage additional funding. The recent commitment by AREC, Inc., of \$100,000 of its available funding, which leveraged a \$50,000 grant from the Indiana Department of Commerce for staffing and operations, is evidence of the priority and recognized importance of the need for staff capacity to carryout the EC Strategy. This commitment by AREC, Inc. and the State of Indiana represents an important priority step toward implementing the Rural EZ/EC Strategic Plan which must be based on partnerships if success is to be achieved.

Middle Rio Grande Enterprise Community

distance interactive video board meetings training

Like many rural communities, Middle Rio Grande Enterprise Community (Texas) has to combat the issue of distance between its five counties, which leads to absence of members at meetings. They do this by conducting most training and Board of Directors meetings via distance learning/interactive video. All five counties are connected to a WAN that originates at Southwest Texas Junior College. The service is provided free by SWTJC and the school districts of Eagle Pass, Cotulla, Crystal City and Carrizo Springs. In the future, they plan to conduct a needs assessment and feel certain that the expansion of the WAN or creation of additional systems similar to the one that SWTJC now oversees will be warranted. The objective is to ultimately create their own system.

Central Appalachia Enterprise Community

innovative financing partnerships alternative financing

Central Appalachia Enterprise Community (West Virginia) leased its permanent office from the Clay County Commission for \$5.00 for five years. This partnership allows CAEZ to control administrative costs and continue to provide the needed services for citizens of the EC.

Beadle-Spink Enterprise Community

staff administration lead entity

Beadle and Spink Enterprise Community (BASEC) in South Dakota is continuing to assume more administrative responsibility from the Northeast South Dakota Community Action Program, its original lead entity. In 1999, staffing included three full time positions: an executive director, housing director, and administrative coordinator. In addition, they have two part-time staff: a three-fourths time office / clerical staffer and a part-time loan consultant help with loan packaging. The EC's administrative policies were reviewed with modest revisions by the board of directors in 1999.

Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone

alternative resources administrative office funding staff

Over \$60,000 in private, local, non-profit and state contributions were raised to enable the Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone (SIDEZ) to hire two staff persons and establish an office to provide administrative and program support to the Zone. The State of Illinois provided a grant of \$19,000 to help SIDEZ become established. On April 15th, Donna Raynalds was hired as Executive Director. Ursula Pike, a Peace Corps Fellow in Rural Community Development from Western Illinois University, joined the staff in June for an 11-month internship. Hope Collins, a temporary student office assistant intern from Shawnee Community College and a part-time volunteer through the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, and Pat Kalicki augmented the staff.

SIDEZ established an office in space donated by Shawnee Community College and furnished it with equipment and furniture donated, loaned or leased from its partners. SIDEZ was awarded a \$50,000 grant secured by Illinois Representative Jim Fowler through a Member's Initiative from the State of Illinois.

Sullivan-Wawarsing REAP Zone

administrative funding

Grant funds from HUD made it possible for the Sullivan-Wawarsing REAP Zone (New York) to hire an executive director to administer the strategic plan implementation.

Wichita County Enterprise Community

administrative costs salaries donations

In the Wichita County Enterprise Community (Kansas), the Wichita County Commission donated \$18,750 for half the salary of the EC director and half of the office budget. In addition, donation of office space and associated utilities is valued at \$5,000. The City of Leoti also donated \$23,750 for half of the salary for the EC director and half of the office budget.

Tioga REAP Zone

funding administrative support donations

In the Tioga REAP Zone (New York), the biggest challenge during their startup year was to find funding to cover administrative costs. The Tioga County legislature provided a \$20,000 line-of-credit and permitted Tioga County Economic Development & Planning office personnel and volunteer steering committee members to devote their time to perform administrative functions. The Tioga County Economic Development & Planning Department also provided \$25,000 from its year 2000 budget to assure the hiring of a Resource Development Coordinator (Circuit Rider).

While the donation of staff support worked out for a temporary period of time, it has created a "hardship" on other County functions. Volunteer steering committee members have been an asset as well in keeping the momentum and interest moving forward. However, the Zone needs a dedicated person to implement its functions and move projects forward in order to maintain the Zone's enthusiasm and show the community that the empowerment approach works.

Allendale County Enterprise Community

startup activities building capacity organizational development

Allendale County ALIVE!, the lead entity for the Allendale County Enterprise Community (South Carolina), a Round II EC, is undertaking several projects to enhance its capacity to implement its strategic plan. These include:

- Hire an Executive Director and staff to handle projects and coordinate activities
- Train these persons to follow USDA regulations and board policies and handle day-to-day work
- Choose a fiscal agent.
- Create an advisory council in each census tract to suggest and critique task force projects
- Subdivide taskforces in project-oriented committees
- Hire a county housing specialist to develop and oversee housing programs
- Develop an Individual Development Account Program to give low-income people opportunity to further education, buy a house, or start a business
- Create a Family Resource Center offering wrap around services from many agencies and organizations with recreation, technology and education facilities
- Participate in the Kettering Foundation Community Politics program beginning in June 2000, a multi year in-depth program
- Implement the Palmetto Project program to increase diversity understanding by training facilitators and creating study circles
- Collaborate in the development of a project to create a community of character in Allendale County

- Partner with USC-Salkehatchie to develop sustainability for summer camp at Salk and character education academy for teachers.
- Have board members attend SCEDs training.
- Continue execution of Salkehatchie Leadership Center programs and expand the offerings as funding becomes available

La Jicarita Enterprise Community

staff administrative structure operations management staff

La Jicarita Enterprise Community (New Mexico) enhanced their ability to carry out their daily operations by internalizing their operational structure. This became necessary in order to accommodate the vast range of services the organization and community at large have come to expect. This allows them to streamline their daily accounting operations and support other enterprises as they develop. They are now able to carry out programmatic oversight and management of more than one program at a time. The staff is the key to the overall success of the Organization, surrounding themselves with motivated, multi-talented, self-directed people.

La Jicarita Enterprise Community

administrative funding grant writer

La Jicarita Enterprise Community (New Mexico) reports that a major concern is assuring the long-range sustainability of the organization. They have begun to explore all possible funding-revenue streams. As a corporate function, they identified the need to seek a grant writer/proposal developer. In the past, they have been able to obtain 6 to 10 percent administrative costs for the management and fiscal oversight of some of their programmatic activities. Hiring a full time proposal developer would allow them to further develop their strategic plan implementation activities as well as explore all funding streams for meeting their objective of sustainability.

Mid-Delta Empowerment Zone Alliance

management practices administration accountability grants management procedures

In 1999, Mid-Delta Empowerment Zone Alliance (MDEZA) in Mississippi made major organizational changes and began to overcome barriers within the community and enter into new partnerships with alliances that share the concept of MDEZA's strategic plan.

MDEZA's full Board of Commissioners elected officers to the govern the Board in January, 1999. The newly-organized governing body then began to develop, establish, adopt and implement policies and procedures to govern the organization. MDEZA's Board of Commissioners established and implemented policies and procedures that could measure the organization's administrative effectiveness and efficiency. A grant solicitation manual was established to set guidelines for submitting proposals, and the process for submission was made less cumbersome. Addition-

ally, an MDEZA Subgrantee Manual was developed to provide uniform procedures and administrative guidance to contractors and sub-grantees to ensure that MDEZA protects the funds it disburses, takes necessary measures to ensure the maximum return of services from those funds, and is in compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations governing contracts and grants for services. A Personnel Manual was also developed and adopted.

MDEZA approved procedures for allocating sub-zone funds to each county in the Zone in April, 1999. Five counties in the Zone were each allocated \$1 million; Bolivar County received \$1.5 million because it had more than a proportionate share Zone residents. Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU), the only higher education institution in the Zone, also received \$1 million. MVSU's service population is composed of minorities, with 98 percent of the students receiving financial aid. The funds are being used to attract and provide services for industries, creating nearly 600 new jobs in the Mississippi Delta for economically disadvantaged citizens of rural communities, to provide citizens of rural communities with safe, affordable and a decent water supply, and to extend Internet services to Bolivar County Library system for zone residents.

MDEZA is proud of the progress made during the year of 1999 and the initiative its staff and management demonstrated in developing a new grassroots-oriented approach to community revitalization, special challenges for monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements.

Building Toward Sustainability

Josephine County Enterprise Community

sustainable development tourism quality of life

Economic sustainability requires uncovering underused assets within the community and building strategies to enhance their value. Josephine County Enterprise Community (Oregon) identified tourism as an alternative industry they could develop. They held a three-day community workshop around sustainable tourism development in the Illinois Valley in the summer of 1999 to develop a framework for tourism development that maintains the beauty of the area and high quality of life while creating economic opportunities. The workshop resulted in the development of the comprehensive Action Plan for Sustainable Nature and Culture-based Tourism in the Illinois River Valley (1999), covering further planning, product development, business development and marketing.

The workshop has spawned a number of new sustainable tourism initiatives. Efforts are underway to fund a regional tourism coordinator as part of a region-wide tourism-marketing plan; coordinate and possibly jointly promote local festivals with tourism partners in northern California and southern Oregon; develop a new 35-mile long horseback, bicycling and hiking trail from Lake Selmac, a popular county

park, to the Oregon Caves National Monument; organize a hospitality training for employees in the local service industry; and define limits of acceptable change for our community as part of efforts to monitor and manage tourism development impacts on the valley's natural and cultural tourism assets and quality of life.

Yet, the accomplishment that promises to have the greatest immediate impact on the Illinois Valley has been an initiative to revitalize Cave Junction's downtown area. A three-day planning workshop was organized as a major community event and scheduled for mid-February 2000.

All in all, the IVCRT feels that it is in a strong position to positively and significantly impact the future of the Illinois Valley in the year 2000.

Northwoods NiiJii Enterprise Community

environmental protection sustainability community action alternative resources partnerships

The Northwoods NiiJii Enterprise Community (Wisconsin) concentrated considerable effort on their Continue Strong Opposition to Projects that can Negatively Impact the Environment benchmark. The metallic sulfide mining proposal in their EC threatens to destroy the environment and existing economics. In 1998 the Nashville Town Board voided a local agreement that a former board had signed with Exxon and Rio Algom, Ltd., against the wishes of the community. The mining company sued the town as a result. The Town Chairman and Town Clerk attended an annual conference of the Wisconsin Stewardship Network in January 1999 to seek the financial assistance and support from statewide environmental groups. A group named Earth Wins donated a web site (**www.nashvillewiundersiege.com**) to the town to help seek funds for a legal defense fund established by the town. Partnerships continued with two other groups, Protect our Wolf River and Northwoods Alliance, holding fund raiser events for the town. Overall, \$17,623.66 was raised through these efforts and individual donations.

East Prairie Enterprise Community

job training skill building

One of the three objectives of East Prairie Enterprise Community's (Missouri) economic development strategy is improved access to vocational/technical training. The benchmark specifically states that programs should be "co-located . . . to allow for maximum participation." The county does not have a vo-tech school and post-secondary training is very limited.

The computer lab at the Susanna Wesley Center has helped remedy this situation. It is used during the day to teach GED classes. One night a week the lab is used to teach an Introduction to Computers and Windows 95 class. Adults from Mississippi County and people sponsored by their employers have benefited from a very affordable class available locally. In 1998, fifty people completed the class; of these, nine were provided a scholarship. The scholarships covered the tuition of the class for eligible low-income students. The costs were paid by the City of East Prairie

through the Enterprise Community. Two other students received scholarships through the SPIRALS program in 1998. Overall, since May 1997, 180 people have taken the class. While the classes are not part of a larger academic program, they do meet the needs of people who have little or no technology skills. The day classes help prepare GED students who seek higher education by teaching them computer skills which will be of benefit at a college or job.

East Prairie Enterprise Community

beautification esthetics civic pride attractiveness tourism

The East Prairie Enterprise Community has been privileged to have among its civic organizations the East Prairie Garden Club. During 1999, the City of East Prairie won the Missouri Community Betterment Award. This award was presented to the Garden Club because of their contribution to the city. The club's hard work has led to several noticeable improvements in the esthetics of the city. For some time, the club has maintained landscaping on a traffic island at an intersection in town. In 1999 they worked with MoDOT to landscape the traffic islands on Missouri Highway 80/105. Trees, flowers and shrubs now welcome visitors coming in off the highway, along with new wooden welcome signs purchased by the East Prairie Chamber of Commerce and painted by a local artist. One of the signs, in E.C. Davis Park, was landscaped by the garden club to reflect its park setting. Finally, the garden club worked with the library board to complete a sorely needed landscape plan at the Mitchell Memorial Library as part of the library's "facelift."

Beadle and Spink Enterprise Community

leadership development, training, recruitment

Recognizing the importance of building its community capacity in order to keep the empowerment process growing, the Beadle and Spink Enterprise Community (BASEC) in South Dakota established special guidelines for grants from its EC funds. Grantees must attend a one-day Community Leadership Workshop that addresses such topics as communication, conflict management, leadership skills, and project management. In addition, BASEC requires that each program receiving grant funding combine participation from both youth and adults, to assist in the development of a new generation of leaders within the community.

BASEC sponsored several leadership training and events in 1999. Over 100 BASEC residents attended Leadership 2000, a community leadership workshop, on May 1, 1999. From that workshop and BASEC's Leadership Pass Thru Mini Grant Awards totaling \$10,500, 40 community projects have been initiated. As a result, the level of community participation has continued to grow and the overall support to BASEC has been excellent.

Watsonville Enterprise Community

job training skills

The Watsonville Enterprise Community (California) is operating a Retail Readiness

Program, a retail merchandising and customer service training program that relates to one of the key economic development activities: job training. In the strategic plan's community assessment, high unemployment leading to low median family and low per capita income was identified as the most pressing economic issue.

The Retail Readiness Program is a free retail merchandising, customer service and cashier training program. Each month an average of ten participants start the program, which lasts six weeks. Participants are City of Watsonville residents over eighteen years of age who test at a sixth grade basic skills level. Before the training begins, participants complete a series of job search workshops through which they learn how to fill out an application, practice interview techniques and discuss employer expectations. The actual training consists of one hundred and twenty hours of classroom instruction (retail training and basic skills instruction) and sixty hours of paid work experience. Participants receive training in customer service, stocking and inventory, cashiering, loss prevention and advertising displays. Participants may earn Regional Occupational Program credits toward their high school diploma or GED.

Josephine County Enterprise Community

environmental quality economic development balanced growth diversification

Diversifying local economic bases is especially important in rural communities, which have traditionally been dependent on a very narrow range of business activity, usually related to natural resource extraction. Josephine County Enterprise Community (Oregon) is committed to establishing and maintaining a well-diversified economy that creates employment opportunities for local residents without endangering the area's high quality of life. In pursuing this goal, the Illinois Valley Community Response Team (IVCRT), one of the EC's two subzones, has focused on identifying and implementing multiple development strategies that are mutually supportive and complementary, foster small-scale, incremental growth, and lead to the employment of local residents, all strategies that are important to building economic growth that is sustainable over the long term.

The work of the IVCRT reflects this strategic approach. In 1999, the IVCRT simultaneously pursued development projects in the following strategic areas:

- Comprehensive assessment of the Illinois Valley economy and identification of area-specific, high-impact economic development strategies and actions
- Conventional economic development in the form of infrastructure improvements at the Illinois Valley airport to establish a light industrial park
- Small business development by establishing a Small Business Revolving Loan Fund Program
- Facilitation of access for businesses to business development support programs offered by Southern Oregon Women's Access to Credit, Inc.

- and the local Small Business Development Center
- Job skills training through the IVCRT's Community Education Program
- Sustainable nature-based and culture-based tourism development

Through these initiatives, the IVCRT is attempting to create and improve conditions that stimulate value-added, meaningful economic activity and employment in the Illinois Valley while safeguarding the area's high quality of life.

Fayette Enterprise Community

farmer cooperatives

The farmers within the Fayette Enterprise Community (Pennsylvania) have historically experienced a loss on locally grown agricultural food and fiber materials. One strategic plan goal is to establish a market facility for farm producers and consumers promoting these locally grown materials, specifically beef farmers. Numerous groups--including the Pennsylvania Farm Foundation, the Pennsylvania Farmers Union, along with local farmers, the Fayette County Agriculture Improvement Association, Penn State Cooperative Extension and the Keystone Development Center--have banded together to form a co-operative to distribute "Certified Keystone Beef" at grocery retailers in the Pennsylvania, Northern West Virginia, Eastern Ohio and New York Regions.

The project made significant improvements during 1999, including completion of a feasibility study, preparation of a business plan, and development of plans for marketing and implementing the business plan.

As a result, individual farmers--rather than competing against one another--have come together with many farming organizations to form a Beef Co-Operative. Fayette County Agricultural Improvement Association, Penn State University Cooperative Extension, Pennsylvania Family Farm Foundation and Fay-Penn Economic Development Council have also been involved in creating the Beef Co-Operative to improve returns for local area farmers. The farming organizations donate technical support for the local farmers to complete various grant applications, and participated in completing the feasibility study and business plan

La Jicarita Enterprise Community

operating methods business creation business ownership non-profit organization

The La Jicarita Enterprise Community (New Mexico) has made some changes to its strategic objectives to improve their ability to achieve sustainability. One change in strategy that has transformed the operations of LJEC was the decision not to take a 25 percent ownership position in enterprises created through the EC and to support privately-owned business development instead. Private business development is a form of economic development strongly supported by the EC's business development and entrepreneurial skills training programs.

A fundamental problem the EC had to overcome during 1999 was need to change

its approach from developing for-profit spin-off businesses to supporting for-profit business activity under our 501(c)3 non-profit status. The parent corporation, La Jicarita Enterprise Community, allows for other growing community organizations to start their activity under its corporate umbrella. Under this organizational structure, LJEC retains full participation, with community members making up the ownership and labor force for these companies. Through its involvement, the EC can attract social and economic conscience investors and other private foundations that support non-profit community initiatives.

Realizing that people are motivated by their self-interests has been a building block they have used to involve the community. This occurs by allowing community members to be more interactive with change, helping them to accept the natural elements of change, and allowing or making available as many opportunities for people to get involved as possible. La Jicarita EC has been successful in allowing community members to participate in their own destiny. They have facilitated and fostered this type of growth by creating opportunities for all members of communities to gain tangible assets as well as those benefits of intrinsic value.

La Jicarita Enterprise Community

youth entrepreneurship local ownership education training business development education school-to-work

In the La Jicarita Enterprise Community (New Mexico), a natural and progressive objective of the School-to-Work (STW) program was the development of a Youth Entrepreneurial Network. Through the efforts of the School to Work/Youth Development staff, this adjunct program has materialized into a model program that is being viewed by other school districts, regionally and nationally, as a viable method of putting youth to work by supporting the creation of youth owned businesses. Work force development is a major focus of this program. Through this project the school systems have taken a keen interest in insuring its success. All three area high schools have donated space, staff support and in-kind contributions for the establishment of three Youth Development Business Incubator Centers. The School to Work program has invested over \$120,000 for direct support of these vital business functions.

The Youth Entrepreneurial Network is staffed with three career counselors and supported by five youth development specialists, all working towards closing the gap between the business and educational systems. These centers have been the impetus to influence over 100 young adults who have taken a weeklong business training and educational capacity building course facilitated by nationally recognized youth business trainers from KIDS WAY, a national youth entrepreneurial development agency. EC staff and individual classroom teachers and administrators are participants and engage in this weeklong training. Training in all aspects of business planning, marketing and investing along with business management, advertising, and start-up business procedures takes place in the school during the summer. La Jicarita's Small Business Development Loan Fund has set aside funding and matched from other partners to directly support youth owned and youth

operated businesses. Web page designers, artists and craft decorators, cake and cookie bakers, auto detailers, and agricultural special projects are all creative businesses started and maintained in the 1999 business year. The aspirations of being successful in business are only reinforced by being successful in the education process. The extended family has also gained a valued interest in their child's education. Students and families are now working towards a goal of attending and subsidizing their own college career. We are monitoring all activities to determine levels of success and community participation. This collaborative approach has opened up opportunities for program funding, leveraging and program sustainability utilizing broader community participation.

As a direct result of the success of the School-to-Work program and the Youth Entrepreneurial Network (YEN), La Jicarita Enterprise Community Youth Development Director and staff developed the design for a new and broad-based educational collaborative. A consortium of over ten entities, including the three area school systems, Las Alamos National Labs, State Commission on Higher Education, Luna Vocational-Tech, Northern New Mexico Community College, Taos UNM and Highlands University, applied to the U.S. Department of Education for a Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness For Undergraduate Programs (GEAR-UP). This proposal was awarded on September 1, 1999 for a total of \$1,901,250 in federal funds with a matching contribution from the partnership of \$3,465,580 for a total of \$5,366,830 in programmatic and in-kind funds.

Northwoods NiiJii Enterprise Community

arts and crafts cooperative youth elderly

One of the most significant projects for the Northwoods NiiJii Enterprise Community (Wisconsin) is the tourism project, and the development of an inter-tribal tourism consortium. Traditionally, the Menominee tribe has experienced frustration with inter-tribal Wisconsin governmental cooperative efforts. The EZ/EC inter-tribal consortium has worked well in spite of minor communication barriers, including inadequate telecommunications and technology barriers.

The early steps in developing a WholeZone Arts & Crafts Cooperative include creating a Youth and Elders Committee and combining it into a Menominee Tribal Tourism Committee. USDA-Rural Development's Margaret Bau (Wisconsin) developed an arts & crafts cooperative concept paper that is a cornerstone for the development of this project. An earlier document developed by business consultant Gary Mejchar also provided keen insight into arts & crafts business marketing. Efforts to solicit input from the Menominee Elders Commission and the Youth Committee are underway. Under the auspices of the Northwoods NiiJii Enterprise Community, Inc., a new organization will be created by combining the efforts of two standing committees to form a Menominee SubZone Committee.

Fayette Enterprise Community

regional cooperation

The most significant accomplishment for the Fayette Enterprise Community (FEC) (Pennsylvania) is the ability for the entire community, which has traditionally seen itself as six very separate communities, to come together as one community, the "Fayette Enterprise Community." In the past, each community has had to fend for itself to cope with long-term distress and compete for funds against the other communities in the region. Although the communities will still have to compete against each other for some funding opportunities, overall their best opportunities will occur when they band together as the Fayette Enterprise Community.

Clare County Enterprise Community

openness participation ideas

The key to success for Clare County Enterprise Community (Michigan) has been the democratic manner by which business is conducted. The Board of Directors views no idea as a bad one. When requests for assistance come to the Enterprise Community, they are reviewed very thoroughly to see which benchmark they might fall under. Because of the breadth of applications, there are few requests that cannot be easily associated with one of the benchmarks.

Fayette Enterprise Community

information technology job search

A significant accomplishment for the Education sub-committee of the Fayette Enterprise Community (Pennsylvania) is the establishment of Rural Online Computer Centers (ROCC's) in the EC. The center, located in Searights Village (Menallen Township), services a subsidized housing community of 144 residents. The computers give access to job leads residents might otherwise have trouble accessing. The computers are connected to the state employment services CareerLink network. Four residents of the community found jobs online even before being officially notified that the connection was available. The Center for Rural Pennsylvania provided second year funding for this project with a \$50,000 grant.

Josephine County Enterprise Community

high value businesses

Maintaining the focus and drive that the EZ/EC program has initiated in a community is one of the challenges to communities facing "graduation" from the program. In the Josephine County Enterprise Community (Oregon), the Sunny Wolf Community Response Team (SWCRT), a sub-zone committee of action, has been forward thinking in its pursuit of long-term sustainability for the organization. In previous years, the organization explored the possibility of a relationship with a deer fencing manufacturing business and the possibility of setting up a small diameter timber business. However, the membership saw the need to partner with high value businesses than either of these. The SWCRT is still searching for business opportunities

that can give it a base of funding so it can continue its leadership to the community beyond the 10-year designation.

McDowell County Enterprise Community

small business development entrepreneurship partnerships

McDowell County Enterprise Community (McCAN) in West Virginia is targeting a number of projects toward building a strong and sustainable base for prosperity. One goal is to develop and expand the base of locally owned small businesses that would fuel the economic renaissance by adding one new job for five years to each existing county-based business. To reach this goal and create new business opportunities, the New York based Rensselaerville Institute, funded through the Appalachian Regional Commission, provided venture capital, gap financing and sound planning and advice to local businesses.

The Institute also assisted several local groups to complete neighborhood projects. As an example, the Institute provided a loan to the McDowell County Board of Parks and Recreation as seed money to convene the first McDowell County Fair. By virtue of a strong first outing, the fair has now become an annual event.

Catholic Community Services, the administrators of the Eckman Learning Center, serves as a pool for employers seeking qualified staff or training opportunities as well as a vehicle for student success for youth and adults. The Appalachian Education Laboratory is working with various citizens groups and the McDowell County Board of Education on issues of education reform and revision of the funding formula.

Bluefield State College and Concord College, in concert with the Council of the Southern Mountains (Community Action Program), the McDowell County Head Start Program and seven other county Head Start Programs, obtained federal funding that will allow and encourage Head Start staff and parents to secure four-year college degrees and other forms of professional development.

Watsonville Enterprise Community

job training youth collaboration gang violence job readiness

The Watsonville Enterprise Community (California) recognizes the importance of collaborating with community based organizations, the school district and churches in order to effectively address the complex issue of youth and gang violence in the community. For the Opportunity to Work program to be a success it required a community-based effort. Specifically, the EC works in partnership with Santa Cruz Community Counseling, Inc.'s *Sí Se Puede* program to provide referrals and supportive services.

The purpose of the Opportunity to Work Program (OTW) is to provide high-risk youth with a positive, structured environment in which they can develop basic job skills. The concept of this program was developed as one of the short-term imple-

mentation strategies proposed by the City to address the issue of youth and gang violence prevention.

OTW is a one-year paid on the job training program which provides youth 18-25 with positive alternatives in a structured environment in which they develop basic job skills. During the training, participants work along side public works and utilities crews, attend job support sessions, and enroll in school. City staff work with the participants to find permanent job placement at the end of the internship. Fifty percent of participants' salaries and all supportive services costs are paid for with Community Development Block Grant funds. Participating public works and utilities divisions pay the remaining 50 percent of participants' salaries and all uniform and equipment costs.

A Sí Se Puede counselor assists with recruitment and pre-training of candidates, which includes program orientation, interview skills, and team building. During the training program, the Counselor meets with Interns twice a week for two hours.

Sí Se Puede operates a residential treatment program that is certified and licensed by the state to provide comprehensive rehabilitation services to men with drug and alcohol abuse problems. The Sí Se Puede program is based on the belief that each individual has the power to change his life for the better, given the desire and a realistic opportunity to do so. The program is bi-lingual and bi-cultural, designed to be sensitive to the needs of Latinos. Services provided by Sí Se Puede include outreach and referral, intake interviews, group and individual counseling, job readiness workshops, and seminars focusing on issues such as relapse prevention, values clarification and domestic violence. Sí Se Puede is one of the only agencies in south county which has an established job readiness training curriculum designed for the target population (high-risk individuals) that the Opportunity to Work Experience serves.

La Jicarita Enterprise Community

youth entrepreneurship business services loans technical assistance

Fostering self-employment is an important way of building sustainable community growth that leaves economic control in the hands of residents. Recognizing the importance of engaging youth in business ownership at the time they are building their livelihoods, the La Jicarita Enterprise Community has established a Youth Entrepreneurship Network. The Network assists young people to attain their goals for self-employment by developing new businesses within the Enterprise Community. Students are taught basic skills for starting their own businesses. The Network also provides low-interest loans and technical assistance. Small Business Incubator Centers provide the young business person with access to computers and software, the Internet, printers, copying machines, a fax machine, telephones, and other services to help them set up financial records and develop advertising.

Accomack-Northampton Enterprise Community

race relations minorities

The Accomack-Northampton Enterprise Community (Virginia) holds Community Unity Day on the third Monday of each February. Community Unity Day promotes community and inter-race unity, celebrates and honors the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and renews the effort to draw broad and diverse community support and participation. The event is jointly sponsored by county government, the public school system, the local NAACP, the Northampton Economic Forum, CBES, the EC lead entity, and other organizations.

Deming Enterprise Community

telecommunications strategic vision

After attending the USDA-CaRDI training session at Cornell University, it became apparent to the Deming Enterprise Community (New Mexico) that telecommunications, specifically broadband capacity, will be of utmost importance in the economic development of rural communities. A community meeting was held in December 1999 to begin educating residents regarding what broadband is, what the benefits are, how to obtain it, and to determine if the community wants to pursue development of this infrastructure. The meeting was attended by 60 residents and the main speaker was Cabinet-Secretary John Garcia of the NM Economic Development Department. Many questions were asked and it was determined that the MVA should seek additional information on behalf of the community. A team leader was selected from the Board and a telecommunications task force created.

Choosing to focus on telecommunications reflects the EC's strategic vision for its future, and its desire to lay a solid foundation that will benefit its citizens long into the future.

Fayette-Haywood Enterprise Community

strategic vision amending strategic plans

Since becoming operational in late spring 1995, the Fayette and Haywood County Enterprise Community (Tennessee) has traveled the irregular path inherent in community empowerment. The community has traveled from the stage of "What's Next?" to "The First Project" to "Maintaining a Sense of Direction" and "Retaining Active Participation." While the pace of action may have been slower than desired, the direction of the community and its commitment to its strategic vision have remained constant.

The community's original strategic plan emphasized projects and programs that invest in the individual "persona" of the community and less on "bricks and mortar." Although the plan has been amended to include new infrastructure projects, such as water lines and industrial park improvements, the EC's emphasis remains on people, programs, and facilities that serve the public. The flexibility of amending the Strategic Plan over the course of the initiative has allowed the original objec-

tives to be accomplished by new means.

For example, the need to assist preschool children was originally expressed as a desire to assist the Head Start program. Later, when the objective was refined, it was determined that the best action would be to partner with the Fayette County Board of Education in developing a preschool classroom. The result was a classroom jointly developed at the Jefferson School in the Enterprise Community. This program has been such a success that the Board of Education has explored expanding its availability. Preschool education has been identified as an important part of any educational system. There have been discussions how this instruction may work in a rural setting. In Fayette County, the answer is "it works well."

Scott-McCreary Enterprise Community

information outreach input reporting radio newspapers

Scott-McCreary Enterprise Community (Tennessee and Kentucky) uses SMART radio to publicize and engage the community in the EC's activities. WHAY radio (105.9 FM) of Whitley City offered 2-3 hour blocks of air-time for the EC to take community involvement into the home. WHAY advertises the program 2-3 weeks in advance. Typically, the radio show is held in the evenings starting at 6:00 pm. After a brief 15-minute overview of the EC program, they invite telephone responses to various questions (e.g., what is the community's greatest need? Why? How should the community meet this need?).

Also, the local newspaper, the McCreary County Record, has offered several opportunities to print surveys in the local paper and return them to the newspaper, the EC office and local banks. Both programs have been very successful for McCreary County.

Metlakatla Indian Enterprise Community

livability environmental quality earth-respecting cleanup

The Metlakatla Indian Enterprise Community (Alaska) has incorporated environmental cleanup efforts into its strategic plan benchmarks. During World War II, a portion of the Annette Islands Reserve became a military reservation. In this area, a ten-year project of cleanup is currently in progress. Some experimental activities are being undertaken, including composting and planting seedlings for a type of grass that helps clean up the soil.

The engineering firms involved in the cleanup have purchased pallet board made locally and trained several tribal community members who are participating in the cleanup. Cleanup of an existing landfill is also one of the EC's benchmark activities.

Metlakatla Indian Enterprise Community

niche markets tourism fisheries wood products custom products traditional arts

Metlakatla Indian Enterprise Community (Alaska) has undertaken several efforts to put services on a self-sustaining basis. One is adding an artist building to the tribal tourism program. The artists contribute toward the use of the building, and in the off-season, there is available space while they are preparing for the next season. They have also have established workshops to preserve traditional arts, as well as enhancing and teaching them to others. The building thus provides an opportunity for the artists to develop the capability to be self-supporting. Local labor and local carpenters using a force account put several local workers to work on this building. In addition, local wood products were incorporated into the construction of the artists building. As a result, all community members participated in its development, leading to a sense of ownership and community pride in its construction.

The EC is proposing to diversity its salmon products and herring fishery, bring new jobs and greatly improving the quality of both herring and salmon products. Improved quality in turn will lead to better prices for finished products. The EC is also seeking to obtain equipment for a custom cutting sawmill to add finished products, including salmon gift boxes made within the EC. The community is building a tribal niche market emphasizing native products made by Tsimshians.

Beadle-Spink Enterprise Community

administrative capacity

Beadle and Spink Enterprise Community (BASEC) in South Dakota has set the following short-term goals:

- Staff and board members will rely less on the parent organization, Northeast South Dakota Community Action Program, and will assume the bulk of fiscal management itself;
- Continue to grow its revolving loan funds with a special emphasis on securing additional sources for the housing program;
- Continue to assist communities in leadership development; and
- Continue to inform communities of opportunities available to them.

BASEC's long-term goal is to be self-sufficient and in existence for years to come, with viable projects and programs that enhance and sustain their rural community.

Fayette-Haywood Enterprise Community

training nonprofits capacity-building leadership development

Building social capital through the enactment of leadership development training workshops for nonprofit community organizations is a continuing long-term goal in the Fayette-Haywood Enterprise Community (Tennessee). This training focuses on making organizations more efficient in operations and services as well as cultivating new leaders in the community.

Southeast Oklahoma Enterprise Community

culture tradition pride spirit cooperation

One of the principles that guides the Southeast Oklahoma Enterprise Community is assuring that development will not trample them--the spirit of the community, its pride, and the well-being of its citizens. In their case, development is the only thing that might save those aspects of community. Indicators such as of loss of population and reduced numbers of enrolled students suggest that failure to develop is what may trample the spirit of the community, its pride and the well-being of its citizens.

The bottom-up approach of developing a strategic plan addresses quality of life concerns by pursuing those things that enhance rather than hamper it.

It is hard to visualize a marina and cabins on an underutilized and underdeveloped lake as doing anything other than improving the local quality of life. Their tourism philosophy subscribes to the belief that successful, sustainable tourism must be authentic and compatible with the resources and culture of the area. For example, their new rodeo roof has allowed horse and rodeo-related events in the community to expand from two to eighteen events in one year. Rodeo, cattle, horses, and their related functions have long been a part of the culture of the area. With the capital needed to cover the arena, this cultural asset becomes a comfortable economic asset.

No city or county government regulations address controls in this area. The progress that is made requires so much community cooperation that something that would be incompatible with community values is hardly possible. Every project requires multiple partners that contribute resources or technical assistance. The Hugo Lake development project is probably the best example. There is substantial review and presentation of tourism planning to local groups that ensures that quality of life issues are offered up for comment, criticism, and modification.

They feel that while their progress is not fast, it is substantial and of good quality. Community communication a substantial contributor in assuring that quality of life

La Jicarita Enterprise Community

Internet marketing web site arts

Using the Internet to market specialized products is a strategy that can link even remote rural communities to larger markets in cities and around the world. **High-roadnewmexico.com** is La Jicarita Enterprise Community's arts marketing and cultural information website, which will include information on all regional artisans, as well as an e-commerce marketplace to sell directly over the Internet. The site will link to related enterprises such as New Mexico Magazine and the Taos Country site, and it will market and promote regional agriculture and cultural projects, such as programs in artisanry and cultural tourism for visiting groups. It will include educational village and cultural information related to the history and the arts.

There will be a 25 percent markup on the e-commerce marketplace. The site will be secure for credit cards. The service will also be available via an 800 number.

Moloka`i Enterprise Community

native plantings sustainable development leadership training empowerment

The Moloka`i Enterprise Community (Hawaii) is confronting a number of problems that characterize a condition of disempowerment. These include lack of resources, feelings of powerlessness, vestiges of racism and under-education.

Many of the EC's benchmarks include strategies for resource acquisition, empowerment of the traditionally disempowered, a variety of approaches to improving race relations, and training. In doing so, they are guided by empowerment principles of economic development, empowering grassroots people, building sustainability and leveraging resources. To these, they have added a fifth, creativity.

Specific plans for the future include a partnership with an expanding credit union, including the purchase of a bank building as its headquarters. An alliance with a minority business being recruited into the EC is another new goal. Race relations and training continue to be at the top of the list of things to be addressed.

In addition, they will undertake ecosystem restoration of Moloka`i's upper watershed areas, which are diminishing because of destruction of the native ecosystem due to impacts of poor land management and development. Efforts are underway to expand local production of native plants and trees, and to provide opportunities for local residents to produce these native species and sell them commercially. This provides economic opportunities for local families and increases the availability of species for restorative plantings, while allowing them to remain in traditional agriculturally based enterprises.

The community has also initiated youth leadership training. A group of approximately 50 Molokai young adults, most in their 20's, have organized Na Pua Nohi Naauao (Learned Youth). The group has been meeting at least once a month since its creation. Recently, the group took on the task of leading the EC Waste Management project. Five of Na Pua Nohi Naauao's members serve on the EC board.

La Jicarita Enterprise Community

tourism arts celebration cultural heritage cooperatives

Choosing to publicize and celebrate the its cultural and artistic assets, which are often an undervalued asset of rural communities, La Jicarita Enterprise Community (New Mexico) has established the Mora Art Tour. This new art tour was developed in community meetings. The theme for 2000 is Dia del Carmen Cultural Arts Tour, and it will be held July 29-30, 2000. Many groups of artisans from the Mora region of the EC are involved in the planning, which is open to all Mora region artisans and artisans from the Las Vegas, New Mexico, and surrounding areas. A \$20 fee will be charged to visiting artisans whether they choose to open their own studios

or join in a group location. The fee for businesses is \$50. A photo exhibition in the Mora Parish Hall will tie into Dia del Carmen history and culture.

Building cooperatives is another sustainable strategy that leaves economic control in the hands of local citizens. La Jicarita is planning to open a community arts retail space in Las Trampas from May to October, 2000. When the space is ready, a call will be issued to artisans throughout the region to provide items for sale. Artisans will pay a 25 percent commission on work sold and will volunteer one day per month to the project during the season when the store is open.

East Prairie Enterprise Community

eco-tourism

East Prairie Enterprise Community (Missouri) has decided to place emphasis on eco-tourism as one facet of its developing economy. The Mississippi County Tourism Council, one of whose goals is dedicated to eco-tourism, has formed and is now supported by funding from the Mississippi County Commission. Several local sites that attract various species of birds, some of them rare, have been identified. A Bird Watchers Site now appears on the East Prairie homepage to encourage "bird watching tourists" to visit the community.

Moloka`i Enterprise Community

agriculture aquaculture sustainable development youth environmental protection

Moloka`i Enterprise Community (Hawaii) is undertaking two projects to restore its traditional sea habitat and recreate traditional forms of food production. The EC has established a youth council, and members of this group, who are up to age 25, are rebuilding the historic stone fish ponds that line the island's reef side. Once recreated, these ponds will fill naturally with fish from the surrounding waters, which will be available for harvesting. A second project is cultivating native sea plants for replanting along the island's shore. Once re-established, they will be available for harvesting as a part of the traditional native diet of the residents.

Both projects are intended not only to become environmentally sustainable, but also to restore a traditional part of the island's habitat and economy.

Lock Haven Enterprise Community

Welfare to Work celebration child care

Making the transition from dependency to self-sufficiency has been a unique and personal experience for each of the 71 participants of the Intensive Case Management Program in Lock Haven Enterprise Community (Pennsylvania). For all of the families that participated in the program, the movement toward self sufficiency has been a process of self examination, goal setting, successes both large and small, and building trust in a program that allows a family to review alternatives and make decisions about their future. For others it meant confronting domestic, social

and economic issues that impeded self-sufficiency. Families with limited resources began examining ways to balance work and family needs. Employment failure was often the result of the inability to cope with the stresses of managing a family home and a weekly paycheck. All of the families received individual attention, support and recognition for their achievements. The most significant accomplishments of the Intensive Case Management Program are 55 percent of the participants obtained employment, 23 percent secured affordable living quarters, and 30 percent successfully addressed income management issues and initiated debt repayment processes.

In 1998 an Intensive Case Management Client, recognizing that training is an important factor in attaining self-sufficiency and that working parents face many issues when searching for affordable, quality childcare, organized a round-table discussion. As a welfare mother enrolled as a full-time student in a four-year university, she recognized the gaps in childcare. Out of the discussion emerged the local childcare Initiative. Now, the Clinton County childcare Initiative meets on a monthly basis to work toward affordable, quality childcare for all working parents in the community. Membership includes over 20 organizations, childcare providers and parents. The Group planned the "Celebration of Champions" an event that recognized the Best Employers for Working Parents and the Best Childcare Providers in Clinton County held in May 2000.

Lock Haven Enterprise Community

personal development empowerment victims child abuse sexual abuse

The Victim Empowerment Project is continuing to provide an advocate to assist clients in their transition from victims to survivors. The Victim Empowerment Program has been enhanced to allow for changing needs for clients within the local community. This year the program was able to send the Victim Empowerment Advocate to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) training. This provided important information when dealing with clients who must work within the welfare system. During the training, TANF Caseworkers were provided with methods of identifying victims of domestic violence and ways to offer support.

The most significant accomplishment for the Victim Empowerment Program was the use of workbooks to enhance the Transition Group, which were purchased to give clients to add visual recollection of handouts to take home. This has demonstrated an increase in group participation and group members' ability to support each other.

Through the Safe Child/Legal Advocate Program the Center has been very successful in securing Protection from Abuse Orders for clients who are seeking them. The training of police officers in Protection from Abuse Orders and Other Domestic and Sexual Violence laws has been successful. Workshops and Support Groups on parenting, self-esteem and safety have been continued because they are valuable resources to the clients.

La Jicarita Enterprise Community

sustainable development tourism arts cultural heritage alternative industries

Like many rural communities, the economic base in the La Jicarita Enterprise Community has been changing. As the timber and textile industries declined in this Northern New Mexico community, local residents gave up hope that new manufacturers would "rescue" their community with new jobs.

But through the leadership of the EC, local residents did not give up. Soon, they came to recognize the value of their natural resources (hardwood timber, pottery clay, and wool production), cultural heritage, and unique local crafts and food products. They developed a Community Arts Marketing Project to promote local crafts and food products and increase tourism in the region. This initiative focused on crafts being locally produced with local materials, ensuring the sustainability of the effort. It also supports the creation of new jobs, value-added production of goods, and increased revenue from tourism. Highlights of the project include:

- Art tours to encourage tourists to visit artisans in the area
- High Road to Taos Art Tour, September 23-24, 2000
- Mora Art Tour, July 29-30, 2000
- Cooperative advertising for local artists and producers to defray the costs of reaching new and larger markets
- Artisan Directory and Tourism Guide to be distributed year round through a variety of networks
- Development of e-commerce through the **highroadnewmexico.com** Website, secured credit card site, and 800 number

Lock Haven Enterprise Community

business development entrepreneurship technical assistance training business loans

The Lock Haven University Small Business Development Center, in the Lock Haven Enterprise Community (Pennsylvania), offers high-quality, one-on-one technical consulting to existing and start-up businesses. The services provided are customer-oriented. The consultant's work schedules are based on client need and time frames. The small business training seminars continue to be expanded with increased demand for training. The Small Business Development Center offers high quality, low-cost training seminars to the business community.

A continued strong partnership with the Lock Haven University Small Business Development Center will enable the City to make more loans to small and start-up businesses.

Lock Haven Enterprise Community

electronic commerce complementary strategies

Designing strategies so that they build on each other's successes is a useful technique in successful strategic planning. Lock Haven Enterprise Community

(Pennsylvania) is a case in point. The West Branch Technology Center, in conjunction with the Small Business Development Center, is preparing to pursue federal and state funding to implement the EC's E-Commerce Initiative. This Initiative will provide for the development of e-commerce through the construction of fiber for businesses in Clinton County, and through a comprehensive package of consulting, training, development of e-commerce plans and financial assistance for businesses.

This initiative complements several other EC benchmarked strategies, including development of a business park, development of a fiber optic network, and services offered by the Small Business Development Center and West Branch Technology Center. The intention of the EC is not only to achieve the goals established at the onset of the program but to also expand on successful programs from these complementary benchmarks.

Clare County Enterprise Community

ideas

For Clare County Enterprise Community (Michigan), the most significant accomplishment is the progress which has been made on the benchmark to establish the Clare County Community Farmers' Market. In mid-summer of 1999, a proposal was prepared and submitted to the Dunlap Leadership Foundation, asking for support of the costs of leadership activities necessary to achieve this benchmark. In November 1999, Tom Guthrie, Executive Director of Michigan Integrated Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS), notified the EC they had been awarded a grant of \$23,175 to proceed with the Farmers' Market project. During December 1999, MIFFS discussed with the benchmark committee the possibility of applying for a Rural Development Enterprise Development (RBEG) grant from USDA Rural Development to support the feasibility study and business plan, and a Michigan Department of Agriculture Export Market Development Assistance Grant to help support web-based international marketing of products. This has created a very positive atmosphere and helped to keep community support and involvement at a high level.

From its weekly reports of the past year (1999), it is obvious that activities and meetings of the Clare County Enterprise Community, including those dealing directly with benchmarks, have been well attended. When the original "grass roots" group learned they were designated a "High Performing Enterprise Community," the level of community involvement rose to an even higher level.

The EC Board of Directors views no idea as a bad one. Each idea brought to the group is treated with equal consideration. Another indicator of high community participation is the number of benchmark champions who are willing to attend workshops and training sessions, no matter the location, to enhance their capacity to succeed.

Watsonville Enterprise Community

job training skills youth entrepreneurship new businesses

Watsonville Enterprise Community (California) conducted a Youth Run Business Project (Feasibility Study) during 1999. The goal of this project was to involve nine youth in writing a feasibility study to establish a youth run business in Watsonville. This study explored the feasibility of opening a Cyber Café. To accomplish this goal, the EC first conducted a series of pre-training sessions to prepare EC high school youth to perform the required tasks to complete the market research and a business plan. EC used resources from El Pajaro Community Development Corporation (EPCDC) and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to provide the pre-training. Training topics included computer instruction (word processing, spreadsheets, and data bases), market research, how to write and administer a survey and the components of writing a business plan. The pre-trainings started in January 1999 and continued on a monthly basis through May 1999. The level of attendance per training exceeded their expectations; the youth showed great interest in the material learned during the training sessions and demonstrated a great amount of motivation throughout this project.

After completing the pre-training, three youth were hired by the EC to work under the supervision of EPCDC. From June to September, 1999, they worked on the market research portion of the study. The students conducted research through interviews, surveys, library and Internet research. Six additional students were employed by the EC to design implement and analyze a market survey. A total of 482 Watsonville residents were surveyed during the annual Strawberry Festival. The information gathered by these two groups of youth was used to write the business plan.

After six months of work, the eight youth who participated in the Youth Run Business Project presented their findings from the marketing survey, the business plan, and the feasibility study and made recommendations to the City Council in November 1999.

North Delta Enterprise Community

race relations empowerment education

North Delta Enterprise Community (Mississippi) faces problems stemming from a lack of resources, feelings of powerlessness, vestiges of racism, and under-education. Solutions include various strategies for resource acquisition, empowerment of the traditionally disempowered, a variety of approaches to improving race relations, and, in their words, "training, training, training."

They base their approach on the empowerment principles of economic development, empowering grassroots people, sustainability, and leveraging. To these, they have added creativity as a fifth basic principle. Their plans for building sustainability include:

- Partnership with an expanding credit union, including the purchase of a bank building as its headquarters
- Alliance with a minority business being recruited into the EC
- Race relations and training

Southeast Oklahoma Enterprise Community

tourism attraction circus

The Southeast Oklahoma Enterprise Community received a \$10,000 grant for a feasibility study from the Department of Commerce, bringing the EC one step closer to establishing a preserve for the endangered Asian elephant and a Circus World Theme Park in Hugo, Oklahoma.

Williamsburg/Lake County Enterprise Community

trust confidence ownership housing credit unions

Building homes in communities will create public trust, ownership interest in residents and provide mortgage funds for the future. Residents will have increased buying power for more goods that will impact retail developments.

To accomplish these goals, the Williamsburg/Lake County Enterprise Community (South Carolina) is developing a single-family housing project in Greeleyville, South Carolina. The project will be completed in phases. The first phase will consist of land acquisition and the construction of five homes. A credit union will be established to aid with bad credit and supervise bank accounts. IDA funds will be used to assist residents in home acquisitions and other major community investment projects.

La Jicarita Enterprise Community

tourism arts marketing celebration

Celebrations can be an effective tool for marketing unique products in rural communities. Recognizing this, the La Jicarita Enterprise Community (New Mexico) is supporting the High Road to Taos. On September 23-24, 2000, artisans and shops along the High Road from Cordova through Placita will be on exhibition for tourists, as well as artisans from Picuris Pueblo, Sipapu, Tres Ritos, Dixon, Embudo and Pilar who wish to join sites already on the tour. This tour, which has offered in previous years, will include even more artisans, food growers and preparers, with a special effort to include youth through the LJEC Youth Development programs. They plan extensive publicity in the local, regional, and national press, advertising in Santa Fe and Taos newspapers and magazines, and Albuquerque radio and TV. A tour brochure listing all the participating artisans with photos of some of the art will also be produced. About 5000 copies of the brochure will be distributed within the region and by bulk mail to their mailing list.

Moloka`i Enterprise Community

self-governance land trust

Moloka`i's Enterprise Community (Hawaii) places great emphasis on reestablishing local ownership and recovery of the many parts of the island's traditional economy. One of its top projects to achieve self-governance is development of a community land trust. This goal received a boost in 1999 from the Bank of America, which provided scholarships for three Moloka`i representatives to attend a land trust training session sponsored by the Institute for Community Economics. A task force is now being created to spearhead the land trust project.

Halifax-Edgecombe-Wilson Enterprise Community

disaster flood derailed efforts

Halifax-Edgecombe-Wilson Enterprise Community (North Carolina) learned that disaster planning and response capability can be critical to sustaining community development efforts into the future. Disasters have a real potential to sidetrack development efforts if a community must struggle to recover from a major disaster, as the following example illustrates.

Hurricane Floyd hit very hard within this EC, and took their focus away from the development of Edgecombe County to the vast destruction that Hurricane Floyd left behind. Their focus at the end of 1999 was still on recovery from the hurricane damage, providing assistance for food distribution, collecting needed clothing and assisting as needed with the Department of Social Services utilizing the Rocky Mount OIC building for a site distribution for funds.

The same was true in Wilson County--as in Edgecombe County, Hurricane Floyd and the flooding brought major obstacles in the flow of programs in Wilson County. Due to Hurricane Floyd and other adverse weather conditions, staff was veered from regular program scheduling.

The staff of the City of Wilson pulled double duty as they made efforts for Hurricane Floyd and the flooding and resumed duties of their regular program scheduling.

Imperial Valley Enterprise Community

job training welfare-to-work small business technical assistance entrepreneurship

Building local business ownership is a prime strategy to help communities achieve economic self-reliance. In the Imperial Valley Enterprise Community, the Imperial Valley Small Business Development Center (SBDC) received EC funds to offer technical services to businesses located within the EC. The SBDC is a valuable asset for the small business community, providing small businesses with access to business counseling, intensive training and access to financing.

In 1999 the SBDC entered into a partnership with CalWORKs to offer customized

training for the welfare-to-work population. The Imperial Valley SBDC served as a pilot center for micro-enterprise training, which marked the first comprehensive business course offered to the local CalWORKs population in Spanish.

Course participants included 17 persons selected and prescreened by CalWORKs, all of whom completed the requirements for graduation. A majority of the participants came from the EC. The training was offered three days a week, three hours a session, for eight weeks. At the end of the course, participants had to create a business plan. In addition to training, participants were able to apply for a micro loan. About eight participants who are currently applying for a loan.

Assiniboine and Sioux Tribal Enterprise Community

organizational capacity representation outreach community input

Best practices of the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribal Enterprise Community (ASTECC) in Montana include:

- Re-prioritizing projects based on the lower budget for the EC designation
- Amending planned benchmarks to strengthen areas such as affordable housing
- Actively recruiting and inviting new partners, organizations, and community members
- Expansion of the executive committee to include important community organizations and county commissions
- Weekly press releases that inform the community of actions taken by the ASTECC
- Open public meetings that afford community residents the opportunity to address needs, concerns, and projects
- Solid working relationships and good communication with the USDA State offices and the Desk Officer in Washington D.C.
- Outreach meetings
- Collaboration with community-owned manufacturing business to coordinate efforts and meet with potential new industries from outside the local area
- Supporting projects of local organizations and creating new benchmarks as those projects arise that benefit the changing needs of ASTECC residents and the ASTECC community
- Working through conflict as it arises through clarification and development of policies that address the conflict and provide a solution
- ASTECC staff and Executive Committee members receiving commissions and appointments to other organizations, which allows a continual process of educating others in regards to social and economic conditions and benefit of partnership with the ASTECC
- Public access to minutes of the ASTECC meetings
- Networking with organizations that traditionally were not partners prior to the EC designation

- Expanding the Executive Committee to include important partners as community needs change

Allendale County Enterprise Community

business incubator communication develop capacity toleration diversity

The Allendale County Enterprise Community (South Carolina) is undertaking several projects to enhance its capacity to achieve sustainability. These include:

- Develop an Individual Development Account Program to give low-income people opportunity to further education, buy a house, or start a business
- Create a Family Resource Center offering wrap around services from many agencies and organizations with recreation, technology and education facilities
- Implement the Palmetto Project program to increase diversity understanding by training facilitators and creating study circles
- Collaborate in the development of a project to create a community of character in Allendale County
- Partner with USC-Salkehatchie to develop sustainability for summer camp at Salk and character education academy for teachers
- Have board members attend SCEDs training
- Develop a business incubator
- Implement a Allendale County Fatherhood Initiative
- Participate in the Kettering Foundation Community Politics program, a multi year in-depth training program
- Implement the Palmetto Project program to increase diversity understanding by training facilitators and creating study circles
- Develop a revolving loan program
- Build a domestic violence program
- Development a project to create a community of character in Allendale County
- Initiate opportunities for positive interchange between the public and law enforcement personnel
- Increase tourist and quality of life attractions
- Build multi-family housing unit for elderly

Lower Yakima County Enterprise Community

long-term thinking leveraging

The Lower Yakima County Enterprise Community (Washington) reached a turning point in 1999. They are now focusing more directly on long-term community development capacity-building. They are shifting their strategy from procuring services with the EZ/EC grant to using the grant as a leverage point to directly provide services.

Jackson County Development Council

sustainable revenue base tourism planning

Developing an effective voice to advocate for itself is one of the skills communities must build on the road to empowerment. In the Jackson County Enterprise Community (Florida), voters approved a referendum to establish a Tourist Development Council-sponsored "bed tax" to be levied on all hotels, motels, and campground sites. In addition, the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce was contracted to promote ECHO-Tourism attractions in our area. The Jackson County Development Council, lead entity for the EC, aggressively supported passage of this referendum.

Efforts did not stop there, however. To develop information and strategies for promoting tourism, a workshop was held, sponsored by the Jackson County Tourist Development Council, Jackson County Chamber of Commerce and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department. At the workshop, participants performed an audit of all natural resources, as well as information about how to start and sustain this type of venture, both public and private.

Imperial Valley Enterprise Community

environmental protection environmental sustainability

One of the key assets of a rural community is its natural environment. And for most communities, an important strategy to develop sustainability is to restore, protect and enhance those assets.

In the Imperial Valley Enterprise Community (California), restoration of the Salton Sea provides a unique opportunity to improve the environment and enjoy economic benefits of a major natural resource. A number of scientific, environmental, and feasibility studies have addressed environmental issues, resulting in five options for reducing the salinity level. Each option comes with a price tag of at least \$300 million, plus maintenance of more than \$1 million annually. Congress will make the final decision regarding the option and on funding.

The Salton Sea Restoration Plan is the perfect example of how a partnership approach process can help coordinate, develop, and implement a program of work. Governmental authorities at the federal, state, and local level are working together to identify prudent actions that can be implemented so the Salton Sea resource can be restored and reclaimed.

New River, the dirtiest and most polluted river in the United States, which starts in Mexicali, Baja California, flows across the U.S.-Mexican border at Calexico, California, and empties into the Salton Sea. New River continues to be a problem of major concern for both Mexico and the United States.

The EC fund funded workshops to increase awareness of the New River pollution and to identify and secure financial resources to help reduce the level of pollution in the New River.

The Citizen's Congressional Task Force on the New River was created in 1997 to come up with a local solution to the problems associated with the river. The task force is ready to begin an ambitious project to filter the river by diverting portions of the river through a series of ponds to create a gradual cleansing process as the water flows into the Salton Sea.

Funding has obtained for sewage treatment projects in Mexicali, Mexico, in order to help clean the New River before it crosses the border. For many years, the City of Mexicali has had an inadequate sewage collection and treatment system, causing sanitation and water quality problems for both the United States and Mexico.

North Delta Enterprise Community

critical thinking strategic planning skills knowledge

The North Delta Enterprise Community (Mississippi) has identified the lack of critical thinking skills as a significant barrier to community-driven, sustainable development. Their Community Training Institute is seeking to address the critical thinking deficit pandemic in the Delta.

Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone

technical assistance business development capital local organizational infrastructure

Building local institutional capacity to support future growth and development is an important strategy for building economic sustainability. In September 1999, Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone (SIDEZ) submitted an implementation plan to the Small Business Administration to open a One Stop Capital Shop in Cairo. Numerous partners agreed to provide business services to the One Stop Capital Shop, including donated office space by First National Bank, half-time clerical staff and transportation by the City of Cairo, and business start-up classes by the Small Business Development Center at Shawnee Community College. The Office of Economic and Regional Development at Southern Illinois University pledged assistance in conducting a business retention and expansion program. University of Illinois Extension will provide youth entrepreneurship training. Local banks pledged \$2.25 million in loan funds to be marketed at the One Stop Capital Shop. The One Stop Capital Shop will open in 2000 when SBA staff have been hired.

Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone

community pride clean-up beautification environment nuisances

The Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone (SIDEZ) formed a Stronger Unity/Sense of Community advisory committee to focus on finding ways to develop pride and a sense of community through community clean-up activities. The committee developed a demonstration model for community clean up that will be tested in 2000. The model includes the passage of a uniform nuisance ordinance by counties and municipalities in the zone who do not already have such laws on their books.

Communities will identify abandoned and blighted structures, concentrating on areas of high visibility. Since most communities do not have a building inspector, SIDEZ will help pay the costs of contracting with a code inspector from Southern Seven Health Department to research ownership of blighted properties and give owners notice of violations. Counties will be encouraged to take advantage of an existing Illinois law that allows the establishment of a non-judicial adjudication system for handling code violations. Use of a non-judicial hearing officer will keep nuisance cases out of an overburdened court system and focus attention solely on nuisance violations. Finally, SIDEZ will help pay for the costs of demolition and clean-up activities.

Also, the zone is partnering with Community Health and Emergency Services, Inc. (CHESI) to sponsor a spring clean up. CHESI will use part of a Department of Human Services grant to help pay for rental of dumpsters and a stipend to youth groups who will supervise trash drop-off by citizens on designated clean-up days.

Southwest REAP Zone

partnerships regional cooperation

A strong sharing, caring relationship has developed between the counties and communities in the Southwest REAP Zone (North Dakota), which is integral to understanding the reality that they will only survive as one large community working together.

Moloka`i Enterprise Community

brownfields environmental quality restoration

The Moloka`i Enterprise Community (Hawaii) is taking action to recover polluted property and put it to productive use in ways that are compatible with a healthy environment. The Moloka`i Electric Co. Brownfield Redevelopment Project received \$40,000 in 1999 for feasibility planning and a pledge from EPA to fund a first-phase environmental assessment of the level pollution on the property. The U.S. Economic Development Administration has also pledged to provide up to \$400,000 on a matching basis for redevelopment of the site. The Moloka`i EC plans to create a business incubator and telecommunications hub on the redeveloped property. As a first step in implementing this part of the project, the SBA has agreed to create and fund a new Business Information Center that will be co-located in the Moloka`i Community Service Council office. MCSC's office is located in a building on the edge of the brownfield site.

Arizona Border Enterprise Community

population retention

The Arizona Border Enterprise Community took an aggressive, proactive move to retain young professionals working in the Douglas area. The City of Douglas has decided issue bonds to construct an unsubsidized eighty-unit multifamily housing complex at the municipal golf course.

Arizona Border Enterprise Community

self-help construction sweat equity labor housing child care job training

In the Arizona Border Enterprise Community, the completion of the Nogales Housing Authority's multi-purpose community center is an Enterprise Community story of success. The structure and finishing touches were provided by local residents. Engineering services, design, and construction work was provided by various residents specializing in these specific services. The Center is currently utilizing 100 percent of its space for classrooms, meeting rooms and recreational use. Programs are provided by a variety of community-based agencies and social services organizations.

Thirteen youth from the EC took part in a job skills training course. The youth helped build 18 storage sheds and rehabilitated five housing units for low-income families. In this summer program, the youth participated in: on the job training, school to work programs, job readiness, construction skills, housing for the elderly, employment opportunities and economic development. EC funds were used mainly for construction materials. The Nogales Housing Authority received the Governor's Community Development Service Award for having successfully trained residents in the area of construction, which has helped some of them to acquire good-paying jobs. The award was presented by Governor Jane Dee Hull at a Rural Development Conference on October 7, 1999.

Chicanos Por La Causa was awarded \$468,000 by USDA Rural Development for a 523 Self-Help Program. The Self-Help Grant will result in an additional 44 homes in the Nogales area over a two-year period. The grant allows low and very low income-qualified families to participate in the Self-Help program. This project's sweat equity averages \$28,000. This amount is what the participating families will save as a result of building their own homes. On the average, the construction in which the families participate equals 66 percent of the labor task. The organization's mission is to help individuals and families improve their quality of life by providing them the opportunity for a better education, good employment, and quality, affordable housing.

The Comité de Bien Estar, in San Luis, Arizona is the recipient of an EZ/EC-earmarked 523 Self-Help Technical Assistance Grant in the amount of \$125,000. The Technical Assistance Grant will be used to supervise and manage the construction of 10 homes to low and very-low income families under the 502 Mutual Self-Help Program. The Comité de Bien Estar also received funds from the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Rural Housing and Economic Development Grant in the amount of \$604,990. The Comité de Bien Estar will use the grant to provide home ownership assistance to more than 75 low-income San Luis families. In-kind leveraging resources total \$4,680,000 in support of this program. The Comité de Bien Estar has been a key player in the implementation of the AZBREC Strategic Plan.

Comité de Bien Estar also received \$50,000 of earmarked USDA Rural Develop-

ment Community Facilities grant funds for a child care facility. This benchmarked project will serve low to very low-income families.

Arizona Border Enterprise Community

entrepreneurship small business development

In the Arizona Border Enterprise Community, the Arizona Council for Economic Conversion (ACEC) received a \$199,000 Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) from USDA Rural Development to establish a Small Business Technology Program in Nogales as a part its Entrepreneurial Development Center in the downtown area. The Center focuses on micro-enterprises and work skills development for residents of the Enterprise Community. The Center has collaborated with seven committed small businesses and is helping them analyze methods necessary to close technological gaps in their business activities.

The Center assesses these small businesses and then designs and implements programs to enhance operations while preserving and creating jobs. In addition to the jobs created, persons employed, and individuals receiving entrepreneurial training, businesses also benefit from an Intermediary Relending Program-funded revolving loan fund. The program was envisioned to preserve 20 jobs and create an additional 20 new jobs.

Together, these actions are helping to build a base of locally-owned businesses within the community.

North Delta Enterprise Community

race relations

One of the most basic issues for the North Delta Enterprise Community (Mississippi) is improving race relations, without which a true community cannot exist. The EC began serious work on race relations in 1999. They are taking four basic approaches:

- Community directed research into communication and other barriers between people of different races
- Task oriented biracial programs to accomplish doable goals set by the community
- Continuing outreach and education, like their fall seminar with former Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy and others, and our Spring Race Relations seminar, with Senator Thad Cochran and others
- Proposal writing for a HUD Fair Housing Initiative grant.

Wichita County Enterprise Community

tourism volunteerism partnerships arts

The Wichita County Enterprise Community (Kansas) has organized an arts alliance to serve the cultural and artistic needs of its residents. In 1999, the arts alliance

held its first event, a Holiday Artists' Studio Tour, which featured seven local artists plus the high school art students' work and studios, drew a crowd of more than 60 people. Other Arts Alliance activities included a silent auction of local artists' work to raise funds for the organization; providing refreshments at intermission of the Wichita County High School musical production; and organizing and sponsoring the Holiday Artists' Studio Tour.

A partnership was formed with the Museum of the Great Plains to house the future art center in the basement of the museum.

The EC partnered with the Wichita County Historical Society to preserve an 1887 Santa Fe Railroad hand-dug well and to develop it into a tourism attraction. A 1920's Santa Fe Railroad depot was located and purchased by the Historical Society to serve as the information center and museum at the site. A \$7,000 grant was received to move the depot to the well site. Volunteers constructed the foundation for the depot and the depot was moved in November 1999.

Center of North America Coalition REAP Zone

e-commerce Internet telecommunications information technology remote location

For many rural communities, especially those that are situated furthest from urban markets, information technology can offer an opportunity to participate in national and worldwide economic growth. The Center of North America REAP Zone (CONAC) has decided to make telecommunications technology one of its priorities. North Dakota is a rural state that must overcome distance in selling its products and services. With information technology, businesses may be able to provide their products and services from rural sites via a computer system, rather than moving to a larger metropolitan area to be competitive. The concept of e-commerce will be a useful tool in pursuing CONAC's mission of reducing the pattern of outmigration by the residents of the REAP Zone.

Center of North America Coalition REAP Zone

grant writing ability professional services organizational capacity

Lack of professional capacity is a barrier to advancement in many rural communities. The Center of North America REAP Zone (CONAC) in North Dakota has started a grant fund that to provide financial support to local economic developers. CONAC's goal is for every county in the Zone to be served by a professional developer. The grant comes with a contingency that the county or local economic development group will provide matching funds to assist in the long-term sustainability of a professional developer.

Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone

funding

Long-term plans for the Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone include developing the capacity of local communities and organizations to plan and carry out

community and economic development activities after EZ grant funds are no longer available. This is a goal whether funding ends after year 10 of designation or after year 2, should Congress not provide funding for years 3-10.

An Idea from OCD

sustainable development strategies

Building the community's capacity to sustain a high quality of leadership into the future, beyond the point of "graduation" from the Community Empowerment Program, is critical to success in the longer term. Communities should consider establishing specific benchmarks focused on building the community's organizational and leadership capacity in order to keep sustained focus on this area and continually measure progress in this area. Benchmark activities might include such things as:

- Developing long-term organizational financing
- Attracting and keeping strong partnerships
- Building and sustaining broad and effective citizen participation
- Maintaining a high level of enthusiasm and commitment
- Uncovering new strategies for sustainable economic development
- Preserving and enhancing the community's special assets
- Encouraging and mentoring emerging community leadership
- Building the talents and skills of community residents
- Establishing locally-generated sources of capital, such as trust funds and investment pools

Beadle and Spink Enterprise Community

revolving loan funds

Revolving loan funds are an important strategy for sustainable economic development, because they represent a continually-growing financial resource available for business and other forms of investment. The Beadle and Spink Enterprise Community (South Dakota) invested much of its EZ/EC funds in several locally-operated RLFs, and has accumulated \$138,000 in interest thus far.

Wichita County Enterprise Community

sustainable development self-sufficiency agriculture

Wichita County Enterprise Community (Kansas) assisted a local organic producer to obtain financing to expand his operations by adding to a greenhouse to raise organic vegetables. Financing was obtained from the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing's Agricultural Products Development Division. This investment helped to diversify this producer's business and create part-time employment opportunities for 3 youth.

Citizen Participation

Middle Rio Grande Enterprise Community

translation language barriers bilingual staff

Because the residents who comprise the FUTURO region served by the Middle Rio Grande Enterprise Community (Texas) are mostly of Hispanic origin, they provide information in Spanish as well as English. They have hired personnel who are bilingual in Spanish and English. They continue to seek programs, such as the Department of Education's Community Technology Centers Program and USDA-Rural Development's Housing Preservation Grants, which are aimed at improving the quality of life for economically challenged individuals.

Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone

outreach public information

One of the public relations tools that has been widely appreciated is a monthly meeting notice card that lists all the Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone meeting dates, times and locations. It is printed on post card stock and mailed at the first of each month. It is sturdy and can be pasted into a monthly calendar or on the refrigerator. Labels are printed from an electronic database. Extra space on the card is used to draw attention to timely information such as job openings, celebrations in communities or tax credits available to businesses in the Zone.

Allendale County Enterprise Community

minority groups low income groups

Allendale County Enterprise Community's (South Carolina) method of outreach to attract people from low income and/or minority groups uses avenues which they trust: churches, faith organizations, word of mouth and influential members of the minority community. The EC uses radio and newspaper announcements and publishes flyers and posters to reach those who respond best to this approach. However, they believe that word of mouth works best. They distribute information on benchmark activities and projects, task force meetings, and contact persons through all of these avenues to maintain and increase community participation.

Northwoods NiiJii Enterprise Community

volunteers elderly

In the Northwoods NiiJii Enterprise Community (Wisconsin), Nashville community uses volunteers to donate a great deal of their time to help achieve some of the EC's goals. In their first year of operations, they continued with their benchmarks without waiting for funding. They were successful in using the private sector to seek funds for the benchmark for Continuing Strong Opposition to Projects that Can Negatively Impact the Environment.

The town helped to create a club for senior citizens to keep them informed on issues pertaining to them, as well as providing a network of volunteers that helped with minor home repairs and transportation to doctors, pharmacies, and grocery stores. Attendance at meetings has grown each month.

Josephine County Enterprise Community

volunteers sustainability

For Josephine County Enterprise Community (Oregon), 1999 represents the third consecutive and highly successful year of the Illinois Valley Community Response Team's (IVCRT) Community Education Program, a very popular jobs skills training, education and workforce support program sponsored, organized and administered by the IVCRT. Due to unprecedented community demand, the program's curriculum was expanded several times during the term. Computer classes such as "Introduction to Computers," "Beginning Internet," "Advanced Computers," "Excel," "Quick Books," and "Word for Businesses" proved to be especially popular, with over 120 community members and one of the Illinois Valley's largest employers taking advantage of this affordable training opportunity. Undoubtedly, with its large course offerings, the Community Education Program has become an integral part of job skills training and workforce support in the Illinois Valley.

Altogether, 16 classes, covering a wide variety of topics from bird watching to foreign languages, were offered in 1999. Over 200 students enrolled in the program, thus, making 1999 the first year for the program to financially break even. This has truly been a major accomplishment in a community as impoverished as theirs.

Importantly, all classes are designed and taught by local community volunteers who only receive a small stipend for their community service. One of the keys to success for the program has been this high degree of community involvement. In fact, term curricula are developed in close consultation with key local businesses and social service agencies to ensure that the program is responsive to their business and clients' needs and systematically builds local job skills and business capacity.

Most importantly, however, the program has been administered by a very capable program coordinator who has led the program to its current success over the last two years. While she receives a small percentage of tuition fees, she essentially runs the program as a community volunteer, demonstrating her strong dedication to her community.

Rio Grande Valley Empowerment Zone

empowerment citizen ownership volunteerism environmental cleanup livability

Cameron County, in the Rio Grande Valley Empowerment Zone (Texas), held Cameron County Community Trash Bash--an environmental clean up day for the Laguna Heights area. The project was co-sponsored by the Laguna Madre Sub-Zone, Valley Interfaith, Cameron County, and Valley Proud Environmental Council.

Residents and volunteers from the Cameron County Sub-Zone participated in the trash bash project. They disposed of approximately 33 truck loads carrying 47 tons of trash. Sub-Zone residents now have a greater sense of ownership in their community and are diligent in finding new ways to become self-sustaining.

Josephine County Enterprise Community

volunteers recognition

A community needs to celebrate its successes and recognize its volunteers. This year, Josephine County Enterprise Community (Oregon) held a major event in the newly remodeled Oregon Parent Center classroom to do just that. Food was provided by the local historic inn and over 300 community volunteers were honored. Approximately 80 citizens participated in the evening event and the overall reaction was to make sure that this became an annual event. Before this Celebration of Community event, there had never really been much recognition of community volunteers.

Fayette Enterprise Community

volunteers private donations

The Fayette Enterprise Community in Pennsylvania made an incredible amount of progress in a short time on the family recreational facility in the town of Republic. Although the anticipated cost for the facility was \$300,000, they quickly received in excess of \$335,000 in public and private funding. But the most remarkable aspect has been the continued support of the community with personal monetary donations totaling over \$47,000, and the numerous hours of volunteer manpower to complete excavation work for the facility. The anticipated opening of the facility will be in the fall of 2000.

Josephine County Enterprise Community

volunteers outreach information newsletter

The Josephine County Enterprise Community in Oregon began publication and free distribution to every family in Census Tract #3601 of a monthly community newsletter, *The Big News*. This "voice of the community" is read avidly and includes news about community activities including the school, the Community Response Team, the Teen Center, the Oregon Parent Center and other agencies and organizations. The two volunteer editors who have published this 12 to 16-page newsletter for the past four years retired this fall, passing the baton to a team of volunteers including 5 middle school and high school youth. The newsletter team prides itself for always making sure that the newsletter is in people's homes the first of each month

Lock Haven Enterprise Community

volunteers outreach literacy

Lock Haven Enterprise Community (Pennsylvania) has conducted extensive outreach and recruitment to encourage those in need of adult basic education and adult literacy services to take advantage of free tutoring offered through the Literacy Corp Program. Both enrollment and retention of adult students has increased since the previous year. To date 58 volunteers have served 93 adult learners through this program. Outreach and recruitment activities include paid newspaper and radio advertising, presentations to community service groups, flyers, maintenance of an informational web site, and contact with human service agencies.

Empowerment Alliance of Southwest Florida

volunteers volunteer coordinator

The Empowerment Alliance of Southwest Florida (EASF) is advertising for the position of Volunteer Coordinator, who will work part-time on developing a network of volunteers and supporting the strategic plan of the EASF. In addition, the Volunteer Coordinator will prepare an assessment of non-profit activities, review them for duplication of services, identify short and long term needs, and assess the need for board training or technical assistance.

North Delta Enterprise Community

burnout minority participation meetings

As North Delta Enterprise Community has matured as an organization, two contrasting changes have occurred regarding community participation:

- Participation has become much broader; and
- The level of excitement and intensity among the "inner circle" has decreased substantially.

The EC has community meetings of one kind or another almost every week. Monthly meetings (open to the public), the Community Training Institute, the race relations functions and other regular or ad hoc meetings involve literally thousands of people in the course of a year. Volunteer programs for local projects, benchmark updates, civic and non-profit meetings, and the building of interest-based consortia have all added to community input.

They have been most successful in outreach to minority and low-income persons. The one sector they have not successfully pulled into the circle is local business, and efforts are now under way to fortify that alliance.

North Delta publishes a twice-yearly newsletter that is a real model for Empowerment Initiatives. They have a "flyer network" for their events, and a large board of 22 members that does outreach to the community. They also use local radio and papers and occasionally Memphis and Greenville TV.

Their emphasis on broad participation is a strategy to spread the work to lessen the tendency toward burnout on the part of those who are carrying the largest burdens.

Fayette/Haywood Enterprise Community

volunteers self-help housing

The Fayette-Haywood Enterprise Community in Tennessee completed its first Habitat for Humanity house in Somerville in May of 1999, using 25 volunteers per day over a period of six days. The Habitat Chapter of Greater Memphis has raised funding for the construction of two more houses in May 2000.

Lower Yakima County Enterprise Community

outreach translation news media

The Lower Yakima County Enterprise Community made communications a priority in 1999. Local communication efforts included notification of local English and Spanish media about meetings and major events. The EC was mentioned in over 40 local articles during 1999, most of them as the featured organization. The EC also operates a web page, and maintains a direct mail notification process for roughly 120 local agencies and citizens for board meetings. Key events such as the annual meeting include a more extensive direct mail effort.

Greater Portsmouth Enterprise Community

low-income minority participation strategic plan updates

Community participation in the Greater Portsmouth Enterprise Community (Ohio) remains at a high level. The GPECC board, itself a broad-based group, keeps the public apprised of developments through its open meetings, press releases, media coverage and community hearings.

The board is structured to assure that low-income and minority groups have an equal voice in the EC process. Community-based organizations which represent low-income constituencies within the area are full members of the EC governing board.

The Community Brownfields Task Force represents the most significant new step in assuring ongoing community participation. This group is made up of a broad cross section with representatives from units of government, business and organized labor, financial institutions and community based organizations.

It is expected that community participation will increase significantly as the board prepares to initiate a third round of updates to the strategic plan during 2000.

Fayette-Haywood Enterprise Community

involvement apathy participation

A problem/obstacle encountered this year which was not initially anticipated at the time the strategic plan was developed was a lack of involvement and a certain degree of apathy in the community. At times, there was a gap between project needs and the human resources available in the community to meet these needs. While an intangible force, the EC community learned that public input and participation is indeed a powerful force and can have a significant impact on activities and involvement occurring within the community. The efforts of community leaders increasingly centered on continuing to maintain direction with the dwindling number of participants in the community at large.

An example of the need to maintain direction became manifest through the continuing efforts to examine the feasibility of establishing a proposed Community Housing Development Organization for Fayette County. While the efforts were initially plagued by preconceived perceptions over its purpose and its role, it later began to succumb to a certain level of indifference evident in the poor attendance at meetings on the subcommittee level. In the long run, the lack of public input and participation had value because it brought to light the need to improve public awareness and cultivate leadership in the community. Efforts in the Enterprise Community this year to address the problems associated with a lack of involvement in the community included:

- Initiating leadership development
- Utilizing inclusivity instead of exclusivity
- Setting the tone for discussion through example
- Including the opposition in all discussions
- Remaining persistent, but with gracious dignity
- Maintaining active involvement even when obstacles surfaced
- Increasing the level of public relations and outreach

In 1999, practices or concepts found especially effective in implementing the strategic plan continued to center around effective communication that includes:

- Policies of inclusivity
- Open meetings
- Speeches to community groups
- Public input
- Public announcements
- Face-to-face meetings
- Progress surveys
- New partner development

East Prairie Enterprise Community

youth donations volunteerism

In East Prairie Enterprise Community (Missouri), Youth for Community Betterment now has sixty five youth members. The club, newly formed in 1999, was inspired and organized by a private citizen in collaboration with the local school and the lead entity. Even with no money with which to begin, they carried out ten successful activities this year. At year's end, an anonymous donor contributed \$4,000 seed money to the group.

East Prairie Enterprise Community

volunteers

In East Prairie Enterprise Community (Missouri), the East Prairie Garden Club, while a small organization, is extremely dedicated. They have been successful at beautifying the community by bringing in additional help from other organizations and groups. One of these is a dedicated group of community members who also often assist tourism efforts. These individuals volunteer for duties such as preparing meals, opening the museum, placing flags and decorations, organizing special events, landscaping, guiding tours and giving special presentations. Often, businesses become involved in tourism by welcoming tour groups and visitors on their advertising signs.

Lock Haven Enterprise Community

youth elderly

One of Lock Haven Enterprise Community's outreach programs is the Home Chore Program. One hundred and three senior citizens residing in the City of Lock Haven were provided with services through this program. Home Chore students performed 299 different minor home chores, enabling the seniors to remain independent and obtain services that contributed to their quality of life. The Home Chore students were afforded an opportunity for intergenerational contact that will give the students a perspective and an enhanced level of respect for the needs, concerns, and difficulties associated with the elder population.

Rio Grande Valley Empowerment Zone

volunteerism

The Rio Grande Valley Empowerment Zone (RGVEZ) in Texas has never fallen short in securing community volunteers. During the Fifth Annual White House Empowerment Conference, community residents and volunteers rallied together to form a one-day intensive showcase of Zone initiatives throughout a 228 mile radius.

One conference participant asked "What is your secret? How do you get your communities to have such a surge of energy and pride?" There is no secret. The grassroots approach simply allows communities to have a voice. After all, they are the ones who live, work, or provide services in the community. The RGVEZC does

not decide for them. The community decides what their needs are. The EZ's goal is to assist in the implementation of the strategic plan.

Austin Rural Enterprise Community

volunteers technical assistance cooperation regional councils

Broad and diverse community participation is the hallmark of the Community Empowerment program and its approach to empowerment and sustainable development. The ten-year strategic planning process in the Austin Rural Enterprise Community (Indiana) was undertaken in a welcoming and spirited manner that assured all citizens that their active involvement was wanted and respected. Now that the creation of this inviting climate for dialogue has occurred, the EC insists that diverse participation and active citizen involvement continue throughout and beyond the ten-year implementation phase. The EC recognizes that without such involvement, empowerment is not possible. All activities of EC are heavily oriented toward broad and active community participation. Not only was the EC Strategic Plan developed with support and involvement from the community at large, implementation continues to be approached in this manner.

Support for the EC from all state, federal, local, and regional agencies and elected officials has been tremendous from the beginning of the initial planning stages. The community-based partnerships established within the Austin and Scott County community have provided enormous support and assistance in both planning and implementation. Volunteer technical resources from a wide array of disciplines were instrumental in preparing the strategic plan. Hundreds of professional volunteer hours were spent during the planning phase that achieved successful EC designation. A complete volunteer board of directors serves as the governing body of the EC, and a volunteer technical advisory team has assumed the day-to-day administrative and operational responsibilities on an interim basis until staff are in place. These include an interim volunteer attorney and engineer. The Scott County Economic Development Commission and River Hills Regional Planning Commission assist with interim day-to-day organizational duties. These duties include serving as the point of contact, fielding inquiries and questions, preparing board agendas and minutes, producing weekly progress reports to USDA, monitoring and updating strategic plan benchmarks and generally assisting the board with coordination and information gathering.

Lock Haven Enterprise Community

volunteers cleanup beautification

In order to increase involvement in EC activities and create awareness of the many EC-funded projects, the Lock Haven Enterprise Community (Pennsylvania) sponsored "Community Days" to engage more people in serving and caring for the community's resources. Held during National Volunteer Week and National Youth Service Days, the event drew over 500 resident volunteers at 18 sites throughout the city by raking leaves at area parks, and painting and cleaning at nonprofit agencies.

For 2000, Lock Haven University's Office of Community Service and AmeriCorps Program agreed to organize the event and implement it throughout Clinton County.

Lewiston Enterprise Community

volunteer recruitment staff training administrative responsibilities

A major enhancement for the Lewiston Enterprise Community (Maine) was the hiring of a full-time executive director. In 1999, the EC was able to rely on the formidable work accomplished by city staff, the Steering Committee and Board of Directors, and volunteers from the 65 partner organizations. However, given the large number of strategies, tasks, individuals and partners involved, having one fulltime individual will enable the EC to attain many more goals during 2000.

To retain its grassroots approach, Empower Lewiston (EL) created the Community Participation Committee specifically to increase public participation in all EL committees, programs and events. The EC made arrangements for training on the functions of a board, which was appropriate as many board members were new to this type of role; the participants' consensus was that it greatly improved communication and cooperation on the board.

Empowerment Alliance of Southwest Florida

Minority and low-income citizens

The Empowerment Alliance of Southwest Florida, a Round II Enterprise Community, has discovered Select 10, a technique to expand community participation.

Select 10 is a technique for Community Decision Making taken from a program entitled: Health Futures: A Development Kit for Rural Hospitals, developed by Paul McGinnis for the Mountain State Health Corporation. Select 10 has been used extensively by community health organizations throughout the nation.

Specifically, the Select 10 technique asks a board member or community resident to select 10 individuals from the community. From this group of 10, the person conducts a "focus group" to learn more about the specific needs of the community as the focus group members see them. In addition to getting valuable input, however, there can be other benefits from this technique:

- Personalizing contact through face-to-face conversations with members of the community
- Increasing community involvement
- Providing reluctant community members a safe way to explore additional ways to participate
- Recruiting new members to the board or committees
- Involving community members in specific EC activities in the community
- Allowing grass-roots community members make decisions that directly

- affect them
- Ensuring buy-in by members of the community to board activities

East Prairie Enterprise Community

food participation communication

Social studies show that serving food is a good way to increase public participation and enhance the quality of communication. The East Prairie Enterprise Community (Missouri) holds a fish fry at community meetings as a way to build attendance and enthusiasm.

Southeast Oklahoma Enterprise Community

outreach public information

Besides using the media for keeping the public informed of EC activities, other methods include posting and distributing flyers regarding, among other things, ribbon-cutting ceremonies and celebration ceremonies. Another very simple and inexpensive, yet very effective, method is "word of mouth." The steering committee members, lead entity staff, business men and women, educators, EC business-loan recipients, residents, and many others are constantly singing the praises of the EC and what it has done for Southeast Oklahoma. They also incorporate the EC's activities, as much as possible, into other events. The local census tract committees have been very successful in educating their respective communities about the Enterprise Community. They have even acquired reputations as good resources and are often called upon for helping others locate programs and funds for other projects.

Southeast Oklahoma Enterprise Community

minority groups underrepresented groups

In the Southeast Oklahoma Enterprise Community, outreach for involving traditionally underrepresented groups, such as low-income and minorities, occurs mainly at the local level. For example, a large percentage of local census tract meetings are held in the low-income, minority-populated sections of the communities. This not only makes attending meetings more convenient, but it also provides an atmosphere that is familiar and comfortable.

However, to a large degree it is the so-called non-traditional groups that work on the implementation of the strategic plan. When the EZ/EC Initiative began in 1994, some "work" had to be done to get traditionally underrepresented groups involved. Because of their minority or low-income status, they felt powerless. However, during the planning process, these individuals became empowered. They have been involved from the beginning and take rightful pride in the accomplishments of the Southeast Oklahoma Enterprise Community. It appears as though the gap between social status isn't as wide as it was in 1994, before the EC designation.

Middle Rio Grande Enterprise Community

public information outreach

Middle Rio Grande Enterprise Community (Texas) uses various methods to inform and involve the community residents, including:

- Articles in local/regional newspapers
- Announcements on local/regional radio
- Mass mailings to about 500 corporate members
- Telephone calls to remind members of meeting
- Presentations by the Executive Director to local civic organizations, local workforce board, and chambers of commerce, regarding the Empowerment

McDowell County Enterprise Community

community

McDowell County Action Network (McCAN), the lead entity for McDowell County Enterprise Community (West Virginia), began operations on February 14, 1994, and received EC status later that year. Immediately realizing the enormity of the task at hand, McCAN began to design vehicles and avenues of community support and input into revitalization efforts. The citizens of McDowell County continue to avail themselves of a variety of methods that encourage and welcome community input and support. It is the feeling of McCAN that the local process developed and implemented for "true" community input and support is very creative, accessible, user friendly, and allows for and encourages citizen participation.

McCAN's claim can be supported by the endorsements and coverage received from the local and regional newspapers, the local radio stations, and regional television stations. More importantly are the numerous responses received by McCAN as a result of citizens completing comment coupons, and phoning the toll free telephone number—McCAN's Community Comment Line. The willingness to become actively involved in this process by the citizens of McDowell County, the energy and enthusiasm that permeates the county, and the positive attitudes exhibited by the community cannot adequately and/or accurately be conveyed here. However, McCAN feels it to be extremely important, and only fair to its many friends and supporters, to attempt to capture the true participatory spirit that has never before been witnessed in McDowell County prior to McCAN's designation as an Enterprise Community and bolstered by the collaboration of its partners. The community response has been overwhelmingly positive and emanates from every hollow, ridge, and mountain in McDowell County. This scope and range of community support is indicative of McCAN's acceptance by the community and the amalgamated effort directed toward amending the original strategic plan.

Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone

volunteers contest logo prize

The Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone offered a \$100 prize to the winner of a contest to design a logo for the EZ.

Moloka`i Enterprise Community

outreach survey youth fair

During the Round II planning process, the Moloka`i Enterprise Community (Hawaii) created an Empowerment Zone Coordinating Committee open to all interested persons. Members talked to co-workers, family, friends, sports team members, and fellow church members, urging them to join the group. The Committee staffed an informational booth at the island's Aloha Week Carnival to seek more interested participants. Nearly 170 people actively participated in the planning committees that produced the Moloka`i's strategic plan. Nearly 300 more attended two community-wide meetings. Written surveys were distributed to all elementary and high school summer students and to members of the Youth Leadership Committee. Surveys were also distributed at the Aloha Week Carnival and at the two community-wide meetings. Two informational newsletters were mailed to every post office and mailbox on the island. Press releases explaining the Empowerment Zone process and inviting people to attend the community meetings were sent to the radio station that is most audible to the entire island. The disc jockeys on this radio station talked about the process and the meetings regularly on the air. All of the 4th through 12th grade school students participated in a survey in which they were asked to respond to the question "If you had 3 wishes for Moloka`i, what would they be?"

Tulare County Champion Community

translation outreach working procedures children youth churches meeting times

In most of Tulare County Champion Community's (California) communities, the population is majority Latino. However, sometimes the visible leaders are not Latino, so it's not a given that they would get Latino participation. The way they do it is to have most communications in Spanish and English. They also have translation capability at every meeting and use it. In some cases, members of the community translate instead of their staff.

They encourage children and youth to attend and participate in all meetings. A part of their strategy is to fully engage youth in all roles, including leadership, e.g., there are youth "slots" on the Board of Directors of the Goshen Planning Council. Having children welcome and with activities for the young ones (colors, paper, books) is helpful to families who can't afford baby sitters and is comfortable to a culture accustomed to taking children places.

An initial part of their recruitment involved community members, largely Latino, going door to door to talk with people about the Champion Community. Involve-

ment of churches and church leaders may also help. They had information tables on church lawns, staffed by Latino community members.

The sustainability depends on how meaningful what you're doing is and how engaged people become. That's why they downplay the talk and play up the action. Having small but real successes from the beginning seems to sustain participation.

Another important strategy is focusing on what people agree on, rather than what they disagree on. Several of their communities have ongoing controversies and splits over issues. They have focused on what virtually everyone can agree on and for the time being avoid the controversies. They are able to involve people who disagree on some issues to work together on CC activities. At a recent community meeting, a leader pointed out afterwards that Mr. A and Mr. B, who were working together at the meeting, hadn't spoken for years until that evening because of a disagreement over another community issue.

Another important rule of thumb: the meeting times must be set by the community participants, not by staff for convenience of staff. That's why their Director works 4 nights a week and most Saturdays and some Sundays.

Northwoods NiJii Enterprise Community

citizen input committees youth elderly strategic planning

In the Northwoods NiJii Enterprise Community (Wisconsin), EC implementation on the Menominee reservation has been a huge undertaking. Using an Affinity Model planning technique, the Menominee Office of Economic Development succeeded in establishing comprehensive community dialogue on all three northern Wisconsin Indian reservations. We are presently reorganizing strategic planning activity by combining the efforts of the Menominee Tourism Committee and the Menominee Elders Commission to establish a Menominee EC SubZone Committee. Public participation improved dramatically during the EC's second six months of operation. In the first half of 1999, the Menominee EC project effort experienced a slow-down in EC committee meeting activity.

Efforts have taken the form of public General Council meetings and Menominee Tribal Legislative meetings and reports. Greater input by Menominee tribal standing committees, in particular the newly established Menominee Tourism Committee, has greatly increased participant performance. The total number of community meetings throughout 1999 involving EC project development, benchmark and community participation totals 19. Special efforts to involve traditionally underrepresented groups, particularly low-income people, elderly as well as youth, have taken on a more responsive approach. We continue to pursue greater community input by initiating group meetings and other dialogue with traditionally underrepresented individuals and groups. Participation will be greatly increased as the Menominee Community SubZone Committee becomes operational.

Mississippi County Enterprise Community

outreach speaker's bureau

Mississippi County Enterprise Community (Arkansas) reports that their Town Hall meetings and community outreach efforts have resulted in good participation. They will attempt to reach more people by establishing a speaker's bureau.

Breathitt County Action Team Champion Community

outreach involvement

"I moved into a new town to start a community-based sustainable economic development program. At first I had the names of 3-4 people who might be interested. I met with these people personally. I got a name from each of these individuals and again met with the others personally. During these initial meetings, I introduced myself, the process and asked if they would come to a few of these meetings. In total I may have met personally with 20-25 individuals. I also conducted a fairly large media campaign prior to the first public meeting—radio, newspaper and television. It was interesting to note that of the 25-30 people who attended the first meeting, 95% of them were people which whom I had shaken hands with. Best practice—shaking hands.

"I also contact participants as much as possible between meetings to ask advice or provide updates. I think this builds some sense of ownership and keeps people coming. Keeping people interested, though, is my biggest challenge."

Bowling Green Enterprise Community

outreach public information strategic plan revision television newspapers

Bowling Green Enterprise Community (Kentucky) obtains community participation through various methods. Each month, the Board of Directors meeting is televised by the local Government Access Channel and replayed several days at different times for home viewing. In addition, all EC meetings are publicized through Cable Community Announcements sponsored by the City of Bowling Green, a "City Page" runs twice monthly in the local newspaper, listing all EC activities for the upcoming two to four weeks. Detailed press releases are issued for all upcoming Board of Directors and Resident Council meetings. During the Annual Strategic Plan Review, they held eleven public forums, widely announced, to invite all community residents to review and comment on the Strategic Plan; a final Public Forum was held during the February Board of Directors Meeting.

Lewiston Enterprise Community

minority and low-income participation recruitment board members outreach

Based on its experience, the Lewiston Enterprise Community (Maine) offers this advice about encouraging and keeping minority and low-income citizen participation in the work of the EC:

First, an individual's level of self-confidence is critical. Federal and state programs have sometimes been helpful in bringing this about. One board member was involved with the Head Start program years ago when her children were much younger. That program emphasized that a parent is a child's first teacher and best advocate. With that perspective, she felt much more encouraged to speak up on behalf of her child's interest. This has since carried over to other areas in her life as well, and help give her the confidence to step into the role of EC board member.

Second, the approach used by board members in recruiting residents helps make them more comfortable with their initial involvement. One board member approached a counselor at the middle school located in the EC and asked her to reach out to more active parents about their possible participation in Empower Lewiston. Then, that counselor accompanied those parents to their first Empower Lewiston meeting, which was also held at the school during school hours (eliminating both child care and transportation issues as possible barriers to participation). This gave the low-income board member a tremendous comfort factor, in that she had familiar people with her in a familiar environment while first making contact with a group of "suits" (middle-income professionals) that many low-income and minority folks find intimidating.

Third, it is critical that minority and low-income individuals know they are welcome to participate, and that when they do, their input is considered and respected. Lewiston's low-income and minority board members are not looking for coddling, but they do appreciate it when someone takes the time to explain, in a non-patronizing manner, when an issue is not clear on the first go-around. They mentioned that it is helpful when board members are direct and honest about their own limitations in dealing with low-income and minority communities. They also appreciate having credit given when it is due, no matter how small the contribution (which is relevant for participation by any board

Combining Funding Sources

Northwoods NiJii Enterprise Community

donations Web site Internet

In 1999, the Town Chairman of Nashville, Wisconsin, a developable site in the Northwoods NiiJii Enterprise Community, donated a tourist website (**www.nashvillewis.com**) to the town for one year. This site is currently being used by area businesses and also offered at no cost to local non-profit organizations and churches. The site is used to promote tourism by marketing the local businesses and establishments. The site also promotes area events. The town worked together with the local business association and they have offered to continue paying the cost of the site after the donation expires.

Southeast Oklahoma Enterprise Community

local resources underused assets tourism existing resources

The Southeast Oklahoma Enterprise Community has learned to identify existing resources within the community. They realize that many resources exist that are overlooked simply because they aren't identified as such.

For example, Hugo Lake and the Fort Towson Historical sites existed long before the EC designation, but apparently no one ever thought of developing them into tourist attractions. But with the EC came a tourism director that opened the community's eyes to all the area had to offer.

Northwoods NiiJii Enterprise Community

donations startup problems partners local resources

During the Northwoods NiiJii Enterprise Community's (Wisconsin) first year of operations, it was local resources donated to NiiJii that enabled the EC to survive when EZ/EC Grants were unavailable. The dedicated volunteer service of board members, in-kind rent, technical assistance, personnel services, supplies and the often-required funds were made available to NiiJii by the member Tribes and developable site partners. This input of resources from within an EC with very limited resources underscores the importance the success of NiiJii holds for the local participants. They believe very strongly that the EC status and the strong partnership of those entities that comprise NiiJii is an excellent vehicle, and very likely the only vehicle, to eradicate the extreme poverty and address the lack of educational, social and economic opportunity faced by citizens within the EC.

Center of North America Coalition REAP Zone

revolving loan funds equity capital development assistance grants

The Center of North America Coalition (CONAC) REAP Zone (North Dakota) concentrated on developing financial tools. CONAC initiated three separate funds for financing projects. One, called the CONAC Fund LLC, is capitalized by financial institutions and development groups that purchase shares for \$20,000 each. This fund is used for equity financing. Although the goal for the fund is to obtain purchases of \$1,000,000 of shares, the fund will begin operating when it reaches the \$200,000 threshold.

CONAC also started a grant program to provide financial support for REAP Zone counties to obtain professional developer services. In addition, CONAC started a revolving loan fund to provide low interest loans for projects in the REAP Zone.

Metlakatla Indian Enterprise Community

self-financing leveraging

In the Metlakatla Indian Enterprise Community (Alaska), the artist building project had many contributions from the community. The land on which it is located is tri-

bally-owned, which allowed the EC to leverage its value, as well as the building itself, and the staff dedicated to the project's administration. Similar methods have been used for several other tribal buildings and construction projects within the community. Community members own in common all of the tribal for-profit entities, and are like shareholders, and during profitable times have received distributions of dividends.

Watsonville Enterprise Community

donations training telecommunications volunteers

The Watsonville Enterprise Community (California) Computer Center has seven hundred registered users. The Computer Center recently expanded in response to the high demand for access to technology. The Center now contains 18 new computers for members and two staff computers. Now, a total of 30 of computers is available for job search, homework and general Internet access. A group of volunteers from the EC painted the new room, new carpet has been installed, and bids for the wiring were solicited. Stratos Systems, a local computer vender, agreed to sell the components for the computers at their cost and trained a group of young people to build the computers at their facility. The computers were built in January 2000.

Lake County Enterprise Community

tax credits state enterprise zones cooperation

Cooperation resulted in a successful application to receive state designation of four areas in Lake County, Michigan (three in the Lake County Enterprise Community) as Renaissance Zones. These are 15-year state and local tax-free zones for business development. These areas, designated as commercial and manufacturing areas, will help attract even more businesses to the EC and Lake County area. Lake County partnered with two other counties to create a corridor for economic development along US-10 with access to US-31.

Allendale County Enterprise Community

donations non-monetary resources libraries

In the Allendale County Enterprise Community (South Carolina), the Education/Untrained Workforce Task Force gathered 2000 books and donated them to the Allendale County Schools, as the first step in their book drive.

Lock Haven Enterprise Community

donations community policing

In the Lock Haven Enterprise Community (Pennsylvania), Community Policing was implemented in 1996 to interact and form a trusting partnership with the community to work on and solve problems. The program employs one full time officer, Officer Jeff Fritts, who serves targeted areas within Lock Haven.

Officer Fritts participates in a variety of activities including bicycle registrations, finger printing, the Officer Phil Program, bicycle helmet program and most recently the D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) Program. D.A.R.E. is funded through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency with a cooperative grant with Keystone Central School District and the Lock Haven Police Department. The program emphasis of D.A.R.E. is to help students recognize and resist the many subtle pressures that influence them to experiment with drugs, gangs and violence. In 1999 Officer Fritts continued the bike patrol program which has allowed him to be more visible and active in the downtown area.

In 1999 the Community Policing Program benefited from the donation of a minivan from Jay Kilheeny Ford Car Dealership to provide more effective service. The program also received a \$75,000 grant from the U. S. Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing (COPs) Program to hire an additional officer for three years.

Rio Grande Valley Empowerment Zone

surplus property donations

The Rio Grande Valley Empowerment Zone (RGVEZ) in Texas coordinates a computer and equipment surplus day to distribute resources donated by local, state, federal and private agencies. In 1999 the U.S. Customs Service, Investigation and Surveillance Department donated resources (computers, printers, software) and the RGVEZC donated surplus office equipment.

Approximately 60 computers were distributed, as well as several desks, tables and partitions. By providing this type of resource, RGVEZC assists EZ contractors and other agencies within the Zone that have very limited resources and welcome this type of assistance.

Fayette-Haywood Enterprise Community

partnerships multiple funding sources leveraging

The Fayette-Haywood Enterprise Community (Tennessee) has used EC funds to match Tennessee House Program Funds, which has had a far-reaching leveraging effect in the city of Brownsville. The city received \$800,000 in state funds as a designated "Bicentennial Neighborhood." Also, \$100,000 in EC funds resulted in \$500,000 in state housing rehabilitation funds. This neighborhood initiative has become a model of cooperation and illustrates what can happen when diverse groups come together for a common purpose.

Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone

Empowerment Zone bonds

The Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone (SIDEZ) economic development

committee sponsored a presentation on Empowerment Zone bonds by an underwriting firm knowledgeable about EZ bonds. Subsequently, an intergovernmental agreement was prepared for signature by Johnson, Pulaski and Alexander Counties (the nominating entities for the Zone) and SIDEZ. The agreement will give SIDEZ the authority to monitor, market and approve the issuance of EZ bonds by counties and municipalities in the Zone, which will ensure consistency with the EZ's strategic plan. The intergovernmental agreement will also enable companies wishing to use EZ bond financing to have one point of contact, rather than three. At the close of 1999, a potential \$6 million EZ bond project that would create over 100 jobs was underway in Cairo. A second, smaller EZ bond project was in the development stage in Mounds. Both projects are expansions by existing businesses.

Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone

tourism donations

Many of Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone's (SIDEZ) successes in the tourism area came when SIDEZ-supported projects received funding from other entities. The Mounds City National Cemetery Preservation Commission raised sufficient funds to expand and dedicate 3.64 additional acres at the historic Civil War cemetery. Player's Island Casino donated \$12,500 to help purchase the additional burial grounds. Pulaski County received a \$30,000 U.S. Forest Service Economic Recovery Program Design Engineering grant to study the feasibility of developing a marina on the Ohio River. Alexander County began putting together a tourism action team to apply for funding through the same program.

The City of Cairo was included on an Underground Railroad motor coach tour awarded to Unlimited Tours and Travel, Inc. under an American Pathways 2000 program designation. Cairo also received a \$60,000 grant from the State of Illinois to develop camping sites at Ft. Defiance Park at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. The City of Vienna received a \$30,000 grant from the State of Illinois to move the historic Forman Depot to Vienna Community Park to develop as a welcome center.

Creating and Celebrating "Wins"

Moloka`i Enterprise Community

blessing ceremony dialysis

Moloka`i Enterprise Community's first healthy community project, a new dialysis facility, recently opened. A blessing ceremony was held for the facility just prior to its opening, and it began serving patients as soon as Medicare certification was received.

Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone

volunteers outreach gifts dinner celebration partners

The Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone (SIDEZ) public relations committee produced a coffee cup with the SIDEZ logo and presented it to the Board of Directors members, committee chairpersons and other Zone supporters. In addition, the committee organized an appreciation dinner for the Board of Directors and Zone volunteers prior to the annual board meeting in December. Shawnee Community College Small Business Development Center sponsored the dinner.

SIDEZ received a \$1,000 grant from Rural Partners, a statewide rural advocacy non-profit organization, to use in developing the logo and an informational brochure about the Zone. The public relations committee subsequently developed and distributed a general brochure about the Zone and its goals. The brochure is mailed to persons inquiring about the Zone and is distributed at meetings and presentations. The committee plans to develop a business resource brochure when SIDEZ business assistance programs are more fully established, as well as a quarterly newsletter.

The Zone sponsored an informational booth at the Pulaski County Fair.

North Delta Enterprise Community

race relations creativity collaboration celebration

North Delta Enterprise Community (Mississippi) showed an example of creativity and collaboration with their "Juneteenth" celebration of African-American history, which featured local African-roots musician Otha Turner, in a day of food and music that spotlighted black history and promoted the new health clinic in Como at the same time. The event gave Mr. Turner a chance to market his music locally, allowing a master of his art to receive some appreciation in his own backyard.

Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone

community tour MOA signing celebration

In July 1999 the Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone (SIDEZ) and USDA Rural Development sponsored a narrated bus tour through the Zone for elected officials and other dignitaries. Local residents acted as step-on guides to point out assets and challenges within the Zone. A "Celebration SIDEZ" event was held in each of the three counties in the Empowerment Zone. The bus tour culminated in the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement for the Empowerment Zone in Cairo. Undersecretary of Agriculture Jill Long-Thompson, U.S. Senator Dick Durbin, U.S. Representative David Phelps, former U.S. Representative Glenn Poshard, State Director of Rural Development Wally Furrow, Illinois Representative Jim Fowler, Illinois Senator Jim Rea and Robert Winchester, Deputy Chief of Staff to Illinois Governor George Ryan attended the signing ceremony along with hundreds of Zone residents and invited guests.

Wichita County Enterprise Community

MOA signing project tours county fair celebration

Wichita County Enterprise Community (Kansas) held its Memorandum of Agreement Signing in August 1999 in conjunction with the 100th Anniversary of the Wichita County Fair. Activities for the day included viewing the Wichita County Fair Parade, signing the MOA on the steps of the Wichita County Courthouse and attending a luncheon that followed on the courthouse lawn. In the afternoon, a tour of the EC area and identified projects was given.

Approximately 100 people attended the MOA signing and 70 people stayed for the luncheon that followed. Invitations were sent to every person who participated in the community meetings and/or committees. The general public was invited through newspaper articles, radio and TV interviews, and newsletters.

Oglala Sioux-Pine Ridge Empowerment Zone

need for early successes

The 1999 Annual Report for the Oglala Sioux-Pine Ridge EZ makes clear the need for early successes:

"The President's visit brought promise of access to new markets as well as a higher profile for the EZ. His visit, coupled with staff presentations and statewide speaking opportunities, plus alignment with the national Community Empowerment Board's intent on supporting this EZ, have raised both the profile of this EZ and expectations by partners and the public. Increasing pressure is being felt by those involved to move quickly on project delivery and funding. Community members are also anxious to see results of the EZ as promised."

Assiniboine and Sioux Tribal Enterprise Community

MOA signing tribal customs

Integrating community customs into ceremonies is valuable in establishing the Empowerment Initiative as a community-controlled process. The Assiniboine and Sioux Tribal Enterprise Community (Montana) did so as part of their Memorandum of Agreement signing on June 3rd, 1999. The MOA was signed by the ASTEC Coordinator Melissa Buckles, USDA Under-Secretary Jill Long-Thompson, Tribal Chairman Spike Bighorn, College Board Chairman Arlyn Headdress, and USDA Montana State Director Anthony Preite. The MOA signing was witnessed by Montana's Senator Max Baucus.

Fayette Enterprise Community

MOA signing publicity block party outreach

One of Fayette Enterprise Community's (Pennsylvania) strategies to involve community members in the empowerment process included a "block party" for the

MOA signing in September. The entire FEC population was invited to join in the celebration and signing of the MOA between USDA and Fay-Penn Economic Development Council, the lead entity for the EC.

Special efforts have been made by going out into the community to meet with residents of the EC "in their backyards" to discuss what problems and projects they would like to see resolved or completed in their specific area. The majority of EC initiative activities have been published in the area's local newspapers to ensure that residents are aware of meetings and benchmarks that are active. The Fay-Penn newsletter and the Fayette Forward newsletter that are distributed throughout the county have also been used to inform the public of EC activities.

Southeast Oklahoma Enterprise Community

recognition volunteers partners

The Southeast Oklahoma Enterprise Community believes that recognizing the contributions of all involved in implementing the plan is a very good practice. This includes recognition of the organizations and agencies at local, state, and national levels, which provide the funding and technical assistance necessary for implementation. It includes those individuals who write and submit grant and loan applications. It includes the residents and committee members who donate countless hours of their time to projects listed in the strategic plan.

Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone

logo contest prize

The Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone public relations committee sponsored a logo contest to draw attention to the Zone and to encourage public participation in creating a visual image for SIDEZ. Thirty contestants, including one school class, participated in the contest. A local engineering and surveying firm submitted the winning entry. They were presented a \$100 check. A picture of the design team with the winning logo was published in local newspapers.

Josephine County Enterprise Community

honoring volunteers

A community needs to celebrate its successes and recognize its volunteers. In 1999, a major event held in the Josephine County Enterprise Community (Oregon) did just that. The event was held in the newly-remodeled Oregon Parent Center classroom. Food was provided by the local historic inn and over 300 community volunteers were honored. Approximately 80 citizens participated in the evening event and the overall reaction was that this should become an annual event. Before this Celebration of Community event, there had never really been much recognition of community volunteers in the EC.

Governance

Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone

support letters managing the strategic plan

The Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone Board has developed an effective process for providing support letters to organizations seeking endorsement from the EZ for non-EZ grant funds. The organization seeking support from SIDEZ must fill out an advance notice form to the board that includes information about the amount and funding source for the proposed project and where the proposed project fits within the SIDEZ Strategic Plan. A one-page narrative of the proposed project is attached. A representative of the organization must appear before the board to explain the proposal and answer questions.

This process helps SIDEZ leaders become aware of other activities going on in Zone. It allows SIDEZ to knowledgeably support the activities of partners, especially those activities that are consistent with the strategic plan. The process also acquaints other organizations with the SIDEZ Strategic Plan and its leaders. The system facilitates the tracking of other funding sources leveraged in the zone.

Empowerment Alliance of Southwest Florida

participation subzones

The Empowerment Alliance of Southwest Florida (EASF), a Round II EC, like other start-up community organizations, suffered the effects of changes in its advisory board. Attendance at the advisory board meetings was difficult because of time of day and meeting locations. In addition, several board members found that they did not have enough time to commit to the EC and subsequently resigned. This has been particularly true in Hendry County and the Seminole Indian Reservations in Hendry and Collier Counties. Because of spotty attendance, several members did not receive the USDA Leadership Training Program.

Also, the communities that make up the EC are highly diverse, with equally diverse interests. Therefore, determining a centrally located community meeting site and establishing agendas and programs that impact all has been a challenge.

In addition, during this start-up period EASF has witnessed and responded to a tremendous number of external funding opportunities. While they have positioned EASF to proceed faster than anyone expected, with limited resources and staff, it became difficult at times to respond to all the opportunities that present themselves.

EASF leadership is developing plans to respond to issues with the Advisory Board and keep interest within the EC active. The EC Coordinator and Project Director will be proposing a restructuring plan to the advisory board. This proposal will consider using two standing sub-committees to the advisory board, consisting of the newly established Hendry County Enterprise Zone Board as one sub-committee

and the Immokalee representatives that have been on the Advisory Board as the other. A representative from the Seminole Indian Reservations in each county would serve on the respective sub-committees. Responding to the diverse communities and the many external funding opportunities will require organized, coordinated efforts to create grass-root support and representation and educating all groups about the benchmarks and what they will do for the EC's communities.

Five Star Enterprise Community

committees executive board procedures budget

Governing structures differ from one community to another to meet specific local circumstances. The Five Star Enterprise Community (Washington) formed Community Committees in each of its five census tracts. The executive board has two representatives from each census tract, plus the non-voting lead agency executive director.

Operating policies and procedures included:

- By-laws
- A system for reviewing and evaluating proposals
- A system to bring benchmark proposals to the executive board
- A program budget and administrative budget; the program budget was apportioned to each census tract equally after the administration and an emergency reserve were deducted from the full EZ/EC grant.

Lower Yakima County Enterprise Community

non-profit organization board structure

Organizational capacity building has been a primary focus for Lower Yakima County Enterprise Community (Washington) in terms of both legal organization and community representation. In 1997 the EC identified a strategy to implement a new governance structure by replacing the county advisory committee with a local non-profit Board.

During 1999 several key steps were completed to finish this transition:

- A new and expanded citizen Board which was finalized. This effort included developing a Board Manual and conducting local and USDA training activities.
- The new agency also obtained 501(c)3 designation from the IRS, providing the avenue to now seek private funding sources.
- The culmination of this effort was the signing in late December of a contract with Yakima County to assume responsibility for day-to-day operation of the program.
- This in turn led to the agency forming a dedicated permanent program staff.

All of these efforts are long-term strategies aimed at leaving a permanent legacy in the community when the federal designation sunsets.

Northwoods NiiJii Enterprise Community

non-profit organization governing board participation representation public information public input

The Northwoods NiiJii Enterprise Community (Wisconsin) is constantly striving to refine and expand opportunities for input from those citizens NiiJii is designed to assist. Among the actions NiiJii has taken was creation of an independent state-chartered corporation to best represent the human and geographic diversity of the EC. NiiJii also successfully achieved IRS non-profit status as a 501(c)3 in July 1999. A board of directors was created to equally represent the three Tribal governments and the three developable site partners in the EC. During 1999 a mechanism was created to stagger terms for the purpose of both retaining continuity and providing for greater diversity in Board membership. Board meetings are scheduled at least monthly, more frequently in the early formative stages, and sites rotate in recognition of the vast geographic area of NiiJii. Each NiiJii meeting or forum agenda calls for public input and comments. NiiJii activities are reported to each local area at numerous meetings and other forums. Each Tribe and developable site is establishing a formal mechanism to solicit input on existing NiiJii projects and activities and design future NiiJii initiatives.

Five Star Enterprise Community

tribal communities cultural traditions distance

Five Star Enterprise Community (Washington) combines both reservation and non-tribal community residents. While community participation has been excellent in Newport and North Ferry County, on each of the reservations it has been mixed. This results from the willingness of some people to participate, and by the fact that this way of addressing issues is contrary to tribal customs. However, a core of participants has developed in each community.

A significant partnership has been developed with Keybank, which was one of the original partners and has continued to support and assist the EC. The State Department of Community Trade and Economic Development (CTED) agreed to provide technical assistance to each of the subzone communities in developing and accomplishing their projects.

Problems and obstacles during the startup period have been relatively minor. Much of what was a problem was cleared up with an understanding of the EZ/EC processes.

The most significant problem is getting local participation within the Indian communities. The empowerment process is quite new to them and poses an educa-

tional challenge.

The problem of understanding and accepting the issues of communities 50-150 miles away has caused some discussion. Administrative functions by the lead agency caused some problems as a result of personnel changes, sickness and injury. The solutions:

- Community participation has improved with public information, producing some results, and getting the word to those that needed it
- Administrative problems have been solved with the hiring of clerical staff to assist the lead agency
- Holding regular meetings helped retain the interest of participants
- Holding open meetings with good discussion about issues helps build interest
- Working closely with the USDA staff results in answers to issues

The future of the Five Star EC is very bright. The communities are organized, enthusiastic and good ideas and projects are coming out of them. The needs of each of the subzones are so acute that this process and designation are very important to all concerned.

Lock Haven Enterprise Community

committees strategic plan review

Communities have chosen to organize strategic plan implementation. In 1995, Lock Haven Enterprise Community (Pennsylvania) established a committee and four sub-committees to oversee the administration of the Enterprise Program. These committees meet on monthly and quarterly basis to discuss the successes and challenges of the program, to make recommendations and to approve revisions to the strategic plan. Community participation on these committees is critical to the program's success.

Southeast Oklahoma Enterprise Community

board meetings committees

The Southeast Oklahoma Enterprise Community Steering Committee changed its meetings from monthly to quarterly after June 1999. This was not due to lack of community participation, but because of fewer agenda items. The committee decided it would be better to meet for an hour or two quarterly rather than 15 to 20 minutes monthly. When situations arise requiring board discussion, special meetings are called. The board steering committee met a total of nine times in 1999. Local committees monthly within their respective census tracts.

Assiniboine and Sioux Tribal Enterprise Community

partnerships tribal-government cooperation documentation

Tribal communities whose designated area includes non-tribal lands have a special need--to develop a system of representation in the decision-making process that extends to both tribal and non-tribal members. Often, a history of poor relationships between tribal members and residents of surrounding areas makes this especially difficult. Still, true community cannot occur until this has been achieved.

The Assiniboine and Sioux Tribal Enterprise Community (ASTECC) in Montana was faced with this problem. In November 1999, ASTECC expanded its Executive Committee to include one seat and one vote for each of four county commissions within the reservation, each of the six Native American district-community organizations, and the Mayor of Brockton.

The EC designation served as a catalyst to bring tribal and non-tribal entities together at one table to implement the vision of this racially diverse community. As a result of the designation and formation of ASTECC, communication between tribal, city, state, and federal governments has been strengthened through collaboration, participation, and partnership with community residents. It is truly a grass roots process, "not doing business as usual," that serves to develop the potential of community residents.

The EC designation provided the common factor to bring all races and backgrounds to one table to discuss the future of the community. Historically, no solid foundation for working relationships between the Tribes, cities, counties, and communities existed. The EC designation provided the mechanism for these entities to come together with community members and other essential partners in order to implement projects and plans toward a successful economy for all residents.

The main problems, which were foreseen and anticipated during the application process, were the myths that this was "just another tribal program." Communication with residents through personal contact, public weekly meetings, and press releases eventually dispelled those myths.

There are still tribally affiliated organizations that perceive the EC designation as "owned by the Tribe," and such comments are stated in weekly meetings from time to time. At one point, staff salaries were even held by the fiscal agent for a period of one month, when the fiscal agent choose to regard the ASTECC Executive Committee as "merely advisory."

The ASTECC relies on its organizational documents, including its strategic plan, by-laws, operating policies, MOAs, and personnel policies to clarify roles, responsibilities, chain of command, and authorities. The organizational documents are relied upon to solve any problem that may arise. In instances where there is no clear policy to resolve an issue, the policy subcommittee meets to develop a policy or clarify an existing policy.

Northwoods NiiJii Enterprise Community

board subzones administration startup

The Northwoods NiiJii Enterprise Community (Wisconsin) plans to take the following actions to organize their EC governance and administration:

- Restructure and expand the board of directors
- Hold a board retreat
- Implement formal sub-zone committees for benchmark development and more community input from low-income residents
- Hire an executive director and staff
- Establish an administrative office

Desert Communities Empowerment Zone

minorities women representation subzones

In communities that are large or geographically dispersed, building a sense of participation and ownership can be difficult. Desert Communities Empowerment Zone (California)--made up of several parcels in a very large county--faced this problem. To address it, the EZ held seven board of directors meetings at separate locations throughout the EZ. Each meeting was coordinated between the board members from the particular subzone. Attendance by the public at the meetings has been very good. Meeting notices and agendas are distributed to every local English- and Spanish-language newspaper, radio and TV station, and cable provider for posting on community bulletin boards. All board members are responsible to see that the notices are distributed throughout their respective communities, including local schools. Each meeting is preceded by a tour of the subzone, and most include presentations or performances by local community groups. Every meeting also includes a public comment period in which the public is encouraged to participate.

Board members also conduct monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly town hall meetings of their subzone advisory committees. The intent of these meetings is to provide updates from the board of directors and EZ issue area committee meetings, as well as to conduct ongoing needs assessments and strategic planning at the community level.

It has always been the goal of the EZ to involve traditionally under-represented groups, particularly low-income persons and minorities. This has been accomplished through the recognition of the eight subzone communities and four Tribes for governing board representation. Furthermore, the board of directors of the EZ are elected by residents of subzones or appointed by the Tribes. At this time, their 17-member board includes:

- 4 Native Americans
- 6 Latinos/Hispanic
- 6 Women
- 4 Senior citizens

Rio Grande Valley Empowerment Zone

participation subzones board meetings

Subzone participation in the Rio Grande Valley Empowerment Zone (Texas) has been exceptional and continues to increase. The methodology behind this approach is to empower organizations and individuals to become self-sustaining units within their own communities. By instilling a sense of ownership, residents have a vested interest and unite to participate in community and economic development. Sub-Zone committee meetings continue to be the driving force for sustainable economic and social development in areas of pervasive poverty. Regional board of directors meetings are held at the corporate office and are open to the public. However, the board is adamant about community participation. In order to facilitate a process for hearing concerns from residents, agencies and or organizations within the subzones, a quarterly public forum is held on a rotating basis in each subzone. The community is notified of the quarterly public forum through county and city government, school districts, social service agencies, community facilities, utility companies and through subzone community members. The community is encouraged to participate and are afforded the opportunity to voice their concern at these forums.

Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone

decision-making processes allocation of resources

In defining its service area and allocating resources, the Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone (SDIEZ) faced the fact that communities and leaders within the EZ exhibited different levels of interest and involvement in the Empowerment Initiative. While all of Pulaski County is included in the Zone, only small parts of Johnson County and about three-fourths of Alexander County are included. Communities also had different levels of organizational structure to provide direction in using zone benefits. Pulaski County had a countywide development group that pre-dated the EZ, but neither Johnson nor Alexander counties had a comparable cohesive organization to plan and direct development.

As a result, there was occasional tension between Pulaski County residents, who had some fully benchmarked projects and were prepared for project implementation and Johnson and Alexander county residents who were not as organized or involved in SIDEZ committees. Some residents of Pulaski County complained that the other two counties were holding them back. Alexander and Johnson County residents expressed concern that they would not be allowed adequate time to plan and would not be prepared to compete equally for competitive Zone funds. Some community members and board directors found it difficult to think about the well-being of residents throughout the whole Zone, rather than just their own community.

The biggest problem faced by the board was deciding equitable ways to allocate scarce resources. The opportunity to locate a Small Business Administration One Stop Capital Shop in the Zone created a dilemma for board members. Two good locations were offered. One was at Shawnee Community College, near the Small

Business Development Center in a geographically central but isolated rural setting. The second location was at the far south end of the zone where the largest low-income population resides. Ultimately, the Board chose to recommend locating the facility in the Cairo, a community with the highest concentration of poverty in the Zone.

Deciding how the EZ grant funds should be allocated also presented a difficult decision. The strategic plan did not spell out how funds were to be distributed. At the end of 1999, the board worked out a solution on distributing funding in budget years 1 and 2 that was satisfactory to each of the three counties. The board was considering a proposal to allocate half of the EZ grant on a per capita basis due to the wide disparity of population between Johnson (18%) and Pulaski (40%) and Alexander (42%) counties and make the other half available for Zone initiatives.

Josephine County Enterprise Community

open meetings democratic processes outreach

In the Josephine County Enterprise Community (Oregon), the Illinois Valley Community Response Team (IVCRT)--one of two subzones within the EC--has used two approaches to address the challenge of organizational redevelopment and capacity building.

First, public outreach strategies that had proven effective in the previous year were employed to involve as many community members as possible in the organizational renewal process. In addition, the IVCRT tried to take advantage of new communication technologies, such as e-mail. Both strategies appear to be working.

Second, the IVCRT has espoused an open-book policy when it comes to organizational records, in an effort to improve its accountability to the community. All records, except personnel files, are available for review by community members. Project and operating budgets and financial reports are presented at public meetings in an easy-to-understand format, as are monthly progress reports covering the status of all ongoing IVCRT projects. This has helped to demystify how the IVCRT makes decisions about projects and spending allocations.

IVCRT also faces the challenge of becoming overextended in terms of project workload; to address this, it is pursuing a two-tiered approach. First, efforts to involve more community members in the project work of the IVCRT will increase organizational capacity. Second, the IVCRT is refining its strategic focus by a thorough community-based review of its strategic plan, which will make it easier to determine which projects to take on and which not.

Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone

board decision-making process developing policy options

The Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone (SIDEZ) Board found that one so-

lution for facilitating decision-making on difficult issues was to use small working groups of board, staff and volunteers to develop policy suggestions for board consideration. Policy suggestions and supporting information are sent to board directors prior to meetings so that they have more time for evaluation and decision-making. Sometimes the executive committee performs this function. When especially difficult decisions are under consideration, the president of the board used a round-robin technique that allowed each board director a specified amount of time to express his or her opinion on the matter under consideration. This facilitation method insures that each person's opinion was heard, not just that of the most vocal members.

Leadership Development

Metlakatla Indian Enterprise Community

board training education skills health education distance learning

Metlakatla Indian Enterprise Community (Alaska) has, over several years, established a community educational scholarship program, and each year has awarded several scholarships. The Tamgass Fish Hatchery has benefited, having as its manager a tribal member who received his degree in marine biology and now is implementing a successful operation with a reputation for producing a large number of salmon species with a high percentage return. In addition, majority staffs are tribal members. The Natural Resource Department has a high number of tribal employees who have completed college, returned to the community, and are working for it. Two members of the community have completed college degrees in forestry and are active with other beneficial community projects. The EC is also networking with the U.S. Forest Service and the tribe has been selected to be host tribe, giving exposure to career opportunities.

In the field of health care and services, high recruitment is taking place emphasizing native preference and local hiring. The Annette Island School District has over the years presented a four-year scholarship to students who desire to become teachers.

Two years ago, an educational non-profit group came to the community to develop and assist a partnership between the community and the school district. Each tribal entity and tribal department have set asides within their budgets for specific training for re-certification or continuing education. Some employees are taking advantage of the distance learning through the University of Alaska. Just recently, the University has introduced an on-line distance learning program that is more available to the citizens of the state. Tribal executives have brought training on site for grant writing, tort liability, self-governance, Indian child welfare, and other training that is beneficial for the tribal council and staff.

For medical services, several on-site trainings take place to keep the EMS certification and provide CPR training.

Empowerment Alliance of Southwest Florida

leadership recruitment board representation diversity

The board of the Empowerment Alliance of Southwest Florida (EASF) adopted a policy that ensures broad participation and representation, reflecting the diversity of the community it serves. The members of the board are selected with consideration of ethnicity, gender, income level, and location as well as community involvement.

To recruit board members, advertisements inviting residents to serve on the board, are placed in local newspapers, in English, Creole, and Spanish languages. Interested and qualified applicants are further reviewed for community representation in order to ensure that the community achieves its goals and objectives.

Lewiston Enterprise Community

board roles and responsibilities training outreach volunteers facilitator

Lewiston Enterprise Community (Maine) found that hiring a facilitator to provide a one-day training on the functions of board members to be invaluable. Most participants, from a wide array of backgrounds, reported that the training greatly increased their understanding of their roles and how to be effective through cooperation with other board members. Another key aspect is thorough and ongoing outreach, hence the allotment of eight board seats to residents of the EC. Each EC undoubtedly has rich resources in both its individual citizens and groups, and the Lewiston Enterprise Community feels it is critical to tap into them.

Empowerment Alliance of Southwest Florida

low-income minority participation translation

The community served by the Empowerment Alliance of Southwest Florida has a diverse population of African Americans, Haitians, Hispanics, Native Americans and whites. During Round II planning, community participation was encouraged through extensive media coverage, principally the local newspapers and flyers printed in the three languages: Spanish, Creole, and English. In addition, planning meetings and workshops were conducted in those three languages in order to communicate better and increase the participation of all groups.

Outreach was made to all segments of the community. Meeting notices and surveys were published in English, Spanish and Creole. Community meetings were held where each of the ethnic groups was represented and translation was provided at the meetings. There is a strong sense of unity and involvement within the community. Residents voiced their continued support and participation with the implementation of their strategic plan.

Beadle-Spink Enterprise Community

workshops training grantsmanship

The Beadle-Spink Enterprise Community (BASEC) in South Dakota is emphasizing increasing leadership capacity for all ages. Community leadership workshops and activities were held and individual community assistance was made available to all BASEC communities. Over 40 community projects that included a multigenerational approach have been implemented through BASEC's Leadership Pass Thru Mini Grant Program. Town beautification, cemetery maintenance & repairs, park improvements, community computer classes, fire safety education and heritage projects such as making a video documentary depicting life in a rural community are among a few of the projects.

Two projects that BASEC has assisted occurred with Tulare and Yale's community economic groups. BASEC assisted with grant writing on behalf of these organizations. Both projects were successful in the grant requests. Tulare is putting up a building to be leased to another business. Yale is constructing a community owned café with additional space that a business may also lease. The leadership and community volunteerism that has emerged throughout the BASEC area has been extraordinary.

Moloka`i Enterprise Community

youth

One of Moloka`i Enterprise Community's (Hawaii) top projects in self-governance is youth leadership development, which is well underway with a group of approximately 50 Moloka`i young adults, most in their 20's, that has organized a youth leadership group, Na Pua Nohi Naauao (Learned Youth). The group has been meeting at least once a month since its creation, and held a training retreat for its members in June of 1999. Recently, the group took on the task of leading the EC Waste Management project. Five of Na Pua Nohi Naauao's members serve on the EC board.

Lock Haven Enterprise Community

training

In 1999, the Lock Haven Enterprise Community (Pennsylvania) participated in a series of meetings to discuss the development of a leadership program for the community. Leadership Clinton County is a leadership development program open to all residents of Clinton County. This comprehensive program will hold its first class from September 2000 through June 2001. A committee dedicated to the future of Clinton County included representatives from Penn State Cooperative Extension, Clinton County Economic Partnership, West Branch Technology Center, Lock Haven Federal Enterprise Community, Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, Lock Haven University Small Business Development Center, USDA Rural Development and the Clinton County Training Office, as well as individual community leaders. Graduates of this program will be more ef-

fective in their roles as managers, elected officials, board members, staff or volunteers to many businesses and organizations serving Clinton County. Funding for this program will include in-kind donation from Penn State Cooperative Extension, and financial contributions from the Clinton County Community Foundation, Lock Haven University Foundation, the City of Lock Haven, the Clinton County Economic Partnership, Clinton County and corporate sponsorships. The tuition is \$500 per person, which covers materials, lodging and all meals. Graduates of this program will be more effective in their roles as managers, elected officials, board members, staff or volunteers to many businesses and organizations serving Clinton County.

Griggs-Steele Empowerment Zone

networking innovation ideas partnerships

The Griggs-Steele Empowerment Zone (North Dakota) is participating in the development of an Upper Midwest Peer-to-Peer Network. This network of EZ/EC practitioners will provide valuable lessons to each other in best practices and increase capacity building among the Zones and Communities.

Griggs-Steele Empowerment Zone

board training management skills Carver model

In Griggs-Steele Empowerment Zone (North Dakota), the 8 months the community was without a director was used to develop the policy-making skills of the governing board. The Carver Model of management was adopted in early Summer of 1999. It is a little early for this EZ to disseminate best practice models for other communities. However, from the Executive Director's point of view, the Carver Model of management should be widely used in the EZ/EC initiative.

Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone

youth mentoring board representation

The Board of Directors of the Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone added five youth members to the Board, one for each high school in the Zone. High school administrators nominated the youth. In order to keep the balance of votes between the three participating counties in the zone, youth members from two counties with more than one high school take turns voting.

Mid-Delta Empowerment Zone Alliance

retreat team-building

In June 1999, the Mid-Delta Empowerment Zone Alliance (Mississippi) Board of Commissioners held its annual retreat. During the retreat, commissioners had a chance to work on MDEZA's policies and procedures as well as develop stronger personal relationships with one another.

Northwoods NiiJii Enterprise Community

training peer-to-peer exchanges site visits

In July 1999-Richard D. Ackley, Jr. of Northwoods NiiJii Enterprise Community (Wisconsin) participated in a three day on-site tour in Virginia hosted by the Accomack-Northampton Enterprise Community & the Virginia Eastern Shore Economic Empowerment and Housing Corporation at Nassawadox, Virginia. Accomack-Northampton EC Executive Director, Dr. Art Carter, was the host. The visit was intense, and they managed to compress a good amount of information into a short time period. The importance of commitment and dedication was reinforced by what was experienced during the visit. They were encouraged to consider the many pitfalls that could lie ahead, and to consider the time that can be gained by not having to re-invent the wheel, as had been the experience of Accomack-Northampton EC. The tour provided a good education, and the Accomack-Northampton EC will also serve as a valuable resource for Northwoods NiiJii EC in the future, based on the relationships built during the tour.

Arizona Border Enterprise Community

empowerment livability sustainable development forests environmental protection

In the Arizona Border Enterprise Community, Juntos Unidos, a local Nogales project of the Border Health Foundation, received a \$50,000 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to develop a sustainable neighborhood-based forestry program in the EC. A community empowerment framework will be used to develop culturally appropriate education and training programs for residents to increase their capacity to implement neighborhood improvement projects.

Lower Yakima County Enterprise Community

board training publications

The Lower Yakima County Enterprise Community (Washington) worked through a focused effort of board training and development during 1999. This included development of information manuals, training sessions as a part of board meetings, and participating in the national training program sponsored by USDA. The agency is also a participant in the Northwest Technology Initiative being conducted by the Low Income Housing Institute. This project is conducting an organizational training program using a combination of traditional and Web-based learning tools.

Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone

board training micro-enterprise development

Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone (SIDEZ) directors and community members participated in a variety of training sessions during the 1999 to build their capacity to act effectively as community change agents and manage the non-profit corporation effectively. Nine representatives from the SIDEZ attended a workshop for Round II empowerment zones in Oklahoma City in March. Thirteen representatives from the Zone attended the White House Community Empower-

ment Conference in the Rio Grande Valley Empowerment Zone. In addition, 13 SIDEZ directors and 21 board members from other non-profit organizations participated jointly in 12 hours of board training sponsored by SIDEZ in cooperation with USDA Rural Development and University of Illinois Extension. The EZ was also well represented at a micro-enterprise workshop sponsored by the Southern Illinois University School of Social Work and at the yearly Southern Illinois Economic Development Conference.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Metlakatla Indian Enterprise Community

change of strategies

The Metlakatla Indian Enterprise Community (Alaska) has put its primary focus upon diversification of the local economy, as a result of a recent and dramatic loss of jobs within the community that drove unemployment from a 25 percent level when their strategic plan was developed to an all-time high of 80 percent currently. The closure of two community sawmills and loss of a major employer--Louisiana Pacific--put emphasis on the need to make the strategic plan reflect this sudden change in conditions.

The planning process and benchmarks for the first two years place emphasis squarely on realistic projects to diversity the local economy, create jobs, and expand the number of jobs in existing tribally-operated businesses. Particular emphasis is on value-added projects for lumber and timber products and seafood, as well as the tribal tourism program.

Wichita County Enterprise Community

outreach publicity participation strategic plan priorities

In the Wichita County Enterprise Community (Kansas), more than 150 people attended community meetings and participated in the 7 EC committees during the strategic plan reprioritization process. Two community-wide meetings and 17 committee meetings were held. A number of methods were used to inform the community about these meetings, including newspaper notices, newsletters, postcards, e-mail notices, and phone calls.

Desert Communities Empowerment Zone

startup problems enthusiasm participation board membership

In many communities, significant shifts occurred between the time the original strategic plan was developed during the application process and the time benchmarks are developed and projects get underway. Often, this requires extraordinary efforts to regenerate public participation.

In the Desert Communities Empowerment Zone (California), a loss of interest occurred among many original participants when the funding level for Round II Zones was reduced from \$40 million to \$20 million, and the funding put on an uncertain, annual basis. Many of these persons did not participate in town hall meetings to elect the board of directors. As a result, only four of the seventeen current board members actually participated in the development of the strategic plan. Consequently, the mindset of the new board is not congruent with that of the original steering committee, making it difficult to maintain focus on the strategic plan's vision, mission, and value statements, as well as its goals and strategies.

The primary solution to the problems associated with the reduction in Round II EZ funding and the uncertainty of future funding was to implement a positive and straightforward community education campaign regarding the basic concept of empowerment zones. The empowerment of individuals and the communities is not based upon federal funding or other external sources, but instead emerges from the desires and efforts from within individuals and their communities.

Although the money helps, it is not the key. The uncertain funding factor means that the EZ will have to work harder and be more effective and finding other resources and partners to implement its strategic plan.

The EZ also employed a similar education campaign regarding our DCEZ governing board's ownership of the strategic plan. They designed and implemented an "Empowerment Zone 101" program, various components of which are regularly presented at board meetings. The program starts with the basics--vision, mission, values--just as was done with the original steering committee. Then it proceeds with strategic planning concepts, such as problem and need identification, resources, goals, and strategies, and the Community Empowerment fundamental concept of sustainability. This education process will be ongoing as strategies are implemented, new board members are installed, and other factors influence the long-term vision of the DCEZ.

Josephine County Enterprise Community

study business assessment survey strategic assessment strategy development

Josephine County Enterprise Community (Oregon) successfully designed and conducted a valley-wide business assessment as a key tool for future economic and community development in the Illinois Valley it serves. This important project was made possible through a \$10,000 grant of Rural/Regional Investment Funds, matched by \$5,000 in EZ/EC Grant Funds (SSBG) and in-kind contributions of almost \$12,000.

The project objectives were threefold: first, to evaluate the current state of the economy in the Illinois Valley; second, to identify trends that illustrate on-going structural transformations of the valley's economy; and finally and most important, based on this analysis, to identify specific, action-oriented strategies for job and

business development in the Illinois Valley that will guide future economic development efforts.

To ensure objectivity of this research, the Illinois Valley Community Response Team (IVCRT) contracted with two independent economic research entities, a 12-member team of MBA graduate students at Southern Oregon University (SOU), and Dr. Kevin Preister with Social Ecology Associates. The SOU team was charged with the development, design and preliminary analysis of three interrelated surveys. One questionnaire was mailed to businesses in the Illinois Valley to assess their current economic situation, needs, etc. A second questionnaire was mailed to all Illinois Valley households to gauge valley residents' consumer perceptions, needs, etc. Finally, a phone poll of Rogue Valley residents was conducted to assess external economic forces that directly impact Illinois Valley business opportunities.

This quantitative research was augmented by Dr. Preister's careful qualitative research. Dr. Preister interviewed 134 community members and 49 agency representatives that directly work with the Illinois Valley. He then integrated the SOU data with his own research and identified the nine high-leverage strategies:

- Continue to professionalize the IVCRT
- Develop ongoing capabilities in outreach and issue management in order to make connections between issues and resources
- Along with partners, continue to develop jobs skills training, education and support of the workforce
- Create a Business Support and Incubation Program
- Continue to develop support for particular sectors of the economy
- Develop a housing program to stimulate jobs, skills development, and affordable housing
- Develop a transportation plan capable of addressing workforce issues as well as tourism development
- Extend these efforts to youth in the community
- Create job links with community development efforts

For each of these strategies Dr. Preister identified a set of specific action steps.

Kentucky Highlands Empowerment Zone

involvement openness techniques

Jackson County, Kentucky, a part of the Kentucky Highlands Empowerment Zone, states that its best example of citizen participation is its Vision 2000 Project Group. The group meets monthly, and subgroups of the group meet as often as 3 times per month. The monthly meeting has never had under 30 people in attendance, with usual attendance in the range of 40-45. Because there are always new faces at every meeting, the total number involved is probably 100 or more individuals representing more than 20 different agencies and organizations. The momentum of this group has not worn off, but seems to get stronger and stronger.

The differences between this group and other EZ groups seem to determine why the Vision group is so successful:

- From the very first planning meeting, every community agency and organization in the county was invited. From the get-go, the group got their input--not after it had already decided what to do.
- To arrive at their plan, they used the storyboarding technique, which allows everyone to say anything they want as long as it's not negative, and it is placed on newsprint. And, no matter how poor someone might think someone else's idea is, no one is allowed to make any judgments or comments about what is on the newsprint at that meeting. After the meeting, notes are taken from the storyboard and then the process of elimination begins.
- Every person in attendance at every meeting is asked to introduce themselves and their agency or organization.
- Meetings are advertised in the paper, but they also send colorful, energized reminders with uplifting or encouraging quotes out to everybody.
- After introductions, the vision and mission statement is always read to remind participants of why they are there.
- They do an icebreaker at each meeting. It is always the same one. A member of the group volunteers to make five statements about herself or himself to the group. Four of those are true statements and one is false. The group works together to try and figure out which are truths and which is false. It is an excellent way to learn more about each other, and helps the group to see each other as individuals.
- They always use the same facilitator to create the continuity they feel is necessary; people always know who they are going to "get."
- FOOD!!! People love to eat!!! Sometimes they have potluck, sometimes they have a wonderful cook in the group prepare home cooked meals. Then they take up money after the meal to reimburse her. Sometimes, one of their agencies takes responsibility for the food. It can be as simple as doughnuts. The point is, spending half an hour eating and conversing is time well spent. People look forward to it.
- Everyone realizes their importance to the group. They feel responsible to it.

Rio Grande Valley Empowerment Zone

outreach rules of behavior

During the formative years of the Rio Grande Valley Empowerment Zone (Texas), the zone board was blessed with good chairpersons; each in his or her own way greatly advanced the "Empowerment" process. Among the organization's dedicated leaders is Robert "Bob" Corneilson. Mr. Corneilson serves as Port Director, and was also selected to serve as Chairperson. Under his very able guidance, the organization continues to learn valuable lessons along the way. According to Bob, "I have no doubt that we were successful as chairpersons only because of the dedication of our RGVEZ Executive Director, Bonnie Gonzalez and her team." With an eagle's eye for what might be, Bob's leadership has taken a very persuasive form

of encouraging the empowerment volunteers and the Zone Corporation to:

- Cooperate and make a commitment to work together
- Get the job done, whatever it takes
- Allow others' points of view to be heard without prior judgment so that there is a shared sense of vision
- Omit fault searching
- Change from an individualistic to a cooperative mind set, so that the talents of others are released
- Keep communication open so that others are well informed, able to make good decisions and more supportive to the EZ effort
- Pursue team development
- Expect board members to be leaders, expect compromise, and also expect some failure.
- Expect the process to be exciting
- Recognize efforts of others as well as accomplishments
- Support each other's activities
- Forget the age old art of stereotyping—"if you don't like people, you should not be involved"

Josephine County Enterprise Community

management evaluation

Although the Josephine County Enterprise Community (Oregon) has been successful in its efforts to involve its members, the Sunny Wolf Community Response Team (SWCRT) received complaints from several working people who felt that the meeting schedule did not allow for their participation. This reaction sparked the decision by the CRT board and membership to contract with Kevin Preister of Social Ecology Associates to develop an organizational evaluation of the SWCRT. This evaluation report, completed in June of 1999, included the following key findings:

- The track record of the SWCRT is overall very positive;
- Personnel matters have been handled correctly;
- It is a "learning organization, displaying an ability to learn from its constituents and to be responsive to their interests. An ongoing stream of leadership and participation has been created";
- It is "increasingly democratic--in its structure, in its process of program development, and in its efforts toward inclusion".

A failure of the CRT is the perception by many that it is not following its original mission of jobs and economic development. The perception is that the type of economic development being pursued by the CRT is too closely linked to tourism development, which is felt by many to be an undesirable direction. There is also a concern that the CRT is focusing on infrastructure, which could increase the tax burden on residents long after the CRT is gone. A lot more community education and communication needs to happen to get beyond these perceptions.

Bowling Green Enterprise Community

outreach information cable TV

The Bowling Green Enterprise Community (Kentucky) uses the cable channel for government access to broadcast all EC Board Meetings live and with several regular replays. Monthly schedules are posted for Board and Resident Council Meetings and for public forums during the strategic plan review process. They also distribute monthly fliers inviting all EC citizens to attend the Resident Council Meeting. The fliers list date, time and place of the meeting, along with the meeting agenda.

Metlakatla Indian Enterprise Community

community-respecting strategies culture tradition arts tribal heritage

One of the community assets of importance to the tribal people of Metlakatla Indian Enterprise Community (Alaska) is the salmon industry. The summer of 2000 marks over 100 years of continuous operation of the Annette Island packing company in the salmon industry. Metlakatla is the only tribe in Alaska that has a reserve status. In the 1970's, the State of Alaska banned the salmon fish trap and the Metlakatlans have the only legal fish traps in the state. The tribe had to defend their right to retain fish traps in the U.S. Supreme Court. Tsimshians are known as "the people of the fish trap" and "people of the salmon." Over several decades of active participation in the salmon industry, this was once the mainstay of the local economy.

The tribal leadership decided to move toward diversification of its economic activities, especially through value-added activities, and made every effort to remain in the salmon industry. The tribe now has a year-round fishery, including dive fisheries for sea urchins, sea cucumber, and geoduck. Instead of the traditional seasonal salmon fishery, the seafood processing plant now has year-round work.

They have also decided to capitalize on a tribal tourism operation that in its third year had two cruise liners and a third one visiting to see its operation. A fourth will include Metlakatla in its route in 2001. The tourism program features Tsimshian artists, and a building was constructed by local workers to house the summer tribal tourism program, including the tribal tourism director, tourism program, tour guide, and artists of the community. During the off-season, the facility becomes a cultural heritage learning center to further perfect the arts and provide workshops on art and provides space for artists to prepare for the next tourism season. The tribal tourism program is rapidly developing and makes much use of the culture of the Tsimshians; it is rapidly developing a reputation as one of the best native tours in southeastern Alaska and the subject of an Alaska Airlines magazine article in 1998, which noted its hospitality and friendliness. Workers have received hospitality training and know how to handle crowds.

The community is now working on wilderness trails. A striking rock formation called Yellow Hills sits behind the community and gives a panoramic view of the entire area. A refurbished trail to the top of this hill is now in place.

During the Alaska oil pipeline construction period, Metlakatla had more construction workers per capita of any native village in the area. Workers developed expertise in such areas as heavy equipment operation, welding, and master carpentry, and participated in construction of buildings, roads, water and sewer projects, breakwaters, and homes. In the wake of the closing of two sawmills, the community is moving toward implementation of a potential rock quarry operation, and already seven displaced workers are being trained for heavy equipment operation.

There has been a revival of cultural activities within the community. 1987 marked the tenth anniversary of learning tribal dances and songs. 2000 is the 32nd year Tsimshian art has been taught at the Annette Island School District, and it is most likely that this is the only school district teaching native art that has the expertise of a noted master native artist, a man who is receiving a regional award for many years of service promoting the arts of the Tsimshians and who designed the salmon gift box that is sold to visitors to Metlakatla.

McDowell County Enterprise Community

strategic plan revision outreach public input

On July 30, 1999, in McDowell County Enterprise Community (West Virginia), a Steering Committee convened to initiate a course of action to review and update the original strategic plan and assess progress toward prescribed goals. Additionally, the decision was made to develop new avenues and refine existing approaches to increase the participation from community residents who represent diverse interests, and who could espouse a variety of viewpoints. A Speakers' Bureau was formed to make themselves available to speak with a variety of groups and organizations, including churches, civic clubs, chambers of commerce, governmental entities, and other community-based groups. The steering committee was presented with an overview of the EC process, and challenged to develop a "report card." By unanimous vote, it was decided to aggressively and actively expand upon the previous actions of the McDowell County Action Network (McCAN), the lead entity, that generated the volumes of information incorporated in the original strategic plan. McCAN established thirteen working sub-committees and appointed chairpersons and co-chairs to each. The committees assisted McCAN in developing long-term permanent solutions to the dilemma of McDowell Countians caught in the descending spiral of poverty and distress and integrating those solutions into the development plans for McDowell County. Each committee held two to four public forums that would enable them to:

- Evaluate issues, barriers and problems, and propose relevant solutions
- Assess existing policies and attitudes in their area of concentration (e. g., housing, transportation, economic development, environment, recreation, cultural arts)
- Prepare a "mini" strategic plan to resolve the problematic areas of concern

Time frames for these and other relevant activities were established, and opportunities to encourage more community input-support were identified.

On August 31, 1999, the committees presented their preliminary reports. The reports were vigorously debated, after which the committees convened a final time to refine, revise and fine-tune their reports. The final "mini" strategic plans were completed by September 15, 1999.

WWVA, the regional television station in Bluefield, West Virginia, provided live coverage of some of the projects funded with EC monies, and reported on what the EC designation has meant for McDowell County, and its residents.

In addition, comment coupons were published daily in the Welch Daily News and weekly in the Industrial News for public comment, and many responses were received daily. The toll free hotline received a number of calls from the citizens of McDowell County who unabashedly voiced their comments/concerns.

Once the revision of the strategic plan was completed, it was placed in strategic locations throughout McDowell County for public review and additional comments. Those comments/concerns were thoroughly reviewed and incorporated into the revised plan as warranted.

Fayette Enterprise Community

weekly reports

Fayette Enterprise Community (Pennsylvania) started a weekly reporting system for sub-committees and task leaders. Leaders in the community and in the sub-committees are responsible for reporting back weekly to the Fayette Enterprise Community Manager on the progress to date. Using a one page format (which can be hand-written and easily faxed) makes it easy to report their current activities. Although it was hard at first to make agencies and committees "report" on their activities, it is a wonderful tool to use for the USDA weekly reporting process and when developing the annual report.

Kentucky Highlands Empowerment Zone

strategic plan amendment citizen participation

In the Kentucky Highlands Empowerment Zone (KHEZ), community participation is improving. The primary reason is the fact that their annual amendment process has allowed more community groups to become involved and work so their projects are approved and funded.

Each spring KHEZ holds a series of six public forums to update the residents on the progress of the EZ and to receive input on any changes the public feels important to the Strategic Plan. Only members of the public can originate projects and this is the only forum at which a project can be generated. During 1999, this process resulted in ten funded projects being added to the Strategic Plan and several receiv-

ing increased funding. The new projects are all being undertaken by groups in the community that are new to the process. Also, the size of the projects (nine of the ten are less than \$100,000 in funding) indicates that the smaller-issue constituencies are beginning to present their issues more effectively.

La Jicarita Enterprise Community

celebration successes strategic plan change sustainability

Every project identified in its annual report by the La Jicarita Enterprise Community (New Mexico) experienced significant change in growth during 1999. As time unfolds, they have found that many other sub-programs come to be added, so that the overall sustainability of each of these initiatives is reinforced. The ability by the board and staff of La Jicarita Enterprise Community to implement so many different projects with successful results at different levels has led to more receptive and empowered community participation. The systemic changes created by true grassroots participation--seeing the need for change and making it happen--and celebrating in the success of desired results, makes this one of their worthy accomplishments.

La Jicarita Enterprise Community

strategic plan revision

One of the most significant accomplishments of La Jicarita Enterprise Community (New Mexico) in 1999 was the change, restructuring and implementation of key components of its strategic plan. First and foremost was their foresight and willingness to change, brought forth by staff and the Board of Directors. Then began the monumental task of reinforcing and educating the community, while balancing the dynamics of participation in community transformation. Exposure through meetings, formal and informal gatherings, personal contacts were utilized to inform the community about strategic plan initiatives. Once the community gained trust and understanding of their intentions, their reluctance to change was somewhat diminished.

Upon receiving community direction and gaining an understanding of their needs, a clear and focused change began towards meeting these new community changes and their desired outcomes. Organizational change and restructuring of La Jicarita's internal operations followed, along with substantial changes to the majority of their identified benchmarks. LJEC began the task of creating and implementing these changes by including input from as many participants as possible. The board of directors and staff were able to direct and manage the array of projects by involving more community participation in all levels of decision-making. Network development and collaboration was strengthened and reinforced. Budgetary and management functions were set in place, and finally implementation and critical transformation towards community building started in many different levels.

These projects are interrelated and interdependent on each other; they also include managing several sub-sector programs that directly support and offer a

safety net of oversight, reinforcement and sustainability for the entire organization. These projects include:

- Arts Marketing Cooperative;
- Agriculture Marketing Initiative/Natural Beef-Grain and Grass;
- Wireless Remote Telecommunication Initiative;
- One Stop Shop for Business Development and Economic Facilitation;
- Small Business Development Loan Fund;
- Education/ Youth Development and Workforce Development (School to Work-Youth Entrepreneurial Network);
- Natural Resource Development (Forest Products);
- Mutual Domestic Water Systems and Water Protection Projects.

Southeast Oklahoma Enterprise Community

partner review of benchmarks board signoff on grant applications

It is not common practice for partners to participate in benchmark review. However, the Southeast Oklahoma Enterprise Community does rely on the partners to report funding and technical assistance received and given where they are relevant to actions within the strategic plan. Partners are often involved in the implementation of the strategic plan--sometimes directly and at other times indirectly or unaware they are addressing a project within the plan.

As an example, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma applied for grant funding for Indian housing rehabilitation. The Nation received priority on this grant because the homes that would undergo rehabilitation were located in the Enterprise Community. Representatives from the Nation learned they would need to obtain a statement signed by either the Lead Entity or EC Steering Committee Chairperson to verify that their project was located within the EC boundaries. When this happens, it makes it much easier for the Lead Entity to track leveraged dollars coming into the community.

Assiniboine and Sioux Tribal Enterprise Community

meetings representation team-building records

The Assiniboine and Sioux Tribal Enterprise Community (ASTECC) in Montana has seen levels of community participation steadily increase over the past year. The increase in participation is attributed to the several actions they have taken:

- Weekly press releases, which include actions taken by the Executive Committee, project presentation information, and a standing, open invitation for community residents to attend meetings;
- Expansion of the Executive Committee to include under-represented groups and populations. For example, voting seats were designated to four county commissioners, six Native American district-community organizations, and one Mayor, and an Ex-Officio seat to the Bureau of Indian Affairs;

- Consistency in meetings. The Executive Committee meets every Wednesday at 10:00 a.m., so the time and place are consistent;
- Personal contact and presentations are made to community members, organizations, and entities within the geographic area that have an impact--directly or indirectly--on the designated area;
- Subcommittees were developed that include community residents and organizations traditionally involved in specific areas, such as housing, education, safety, health, community facilities, business development, youth, agriculture, tourism, infrastructure, and elder needs;
- Public meetings are open, and the records and minutes of meetings are open to public inspection;
- Executive Committee members and staff are involved in other community-based and state organizations, committees, and commissions;
- All municipalities and local governments are extensively involved, with community members on the Executive Committee;
- Staff make presentations to local, state, federal, and other organizations and entities regarding the EC designation and benefits;
- Team building has been conducted within the ASTEC, so that the process is not an "I" or "Me" activity, but is a "We" concept that builds consensus and fosters credibility and increased participation in the community.

Southeast Oklahoma Enterprise Community

frequency of reviews

Southeast Oklahoma Enterprise Community has found it to be a good practice to re-visit the entire plan a minimum of twice a year. This "evaluation" of the plan helps to identify progress achieved, unaccomplished goals, and barriers or setbacks to implementation. It also reminds the communities about actions within the plan that still need addressing. Re-visiting "forgotten" actions/goals usually results in a re-assessment of needs. Sometimes this leads to amending or revising the plan, while at other times it leads to taking action aimed toward implementation.

Imperial Valley Enterprise Community

cooperation partnerships strategic plan alliances

The Imperial Valley Enterprise Community (California) found that the EZ Round II application process revealed the importance of having a community--with the cooperation of their federal, state, and local government--develop strategic plans and implemented by alliances among private, public and nonprofit entities. This process was successfully implemented in Imperial County and it will continue because the community realizes the importance of working together to build a plan that will take them toward a new beginning.

Imperial County, with the cooperation of its federal, state and local officials, will continue to adopt an integrated and coordinated approach to promoting sustainable development in its community. The input and ideas of the public will continue to be the guiding principle in creating a vision and plan for the future of Imperial County. The community's involvement and participation is the best approach to enhance the quality of life and spur economic growth throughout the community.

Central Appalachia Enterprise Community

benchmarks evaluation planning goals

Central Appalachia Enterprise Community (CAEZ) in West Virginia continues to revisit its benchmark system to measure and evaluate its progress. Review is an ongoing process and it has allowed them to identify needs, establish goals and objectives, and conduct an evaluation to determine if they have met their goals and objectives.

CAEZ made significant progress in 1999 and as they begin the new millennium, they pledge to continue to keep the enterprise community philosophy as the basis from which they strive to make their region a better place to live.

They have established a system of managerial practices to measure and evaluate the completion of goals and objectives, with expenditures tied to established and approved benchmarks.

They conducted a thorough research of board of directors meeting minutes, financial records, and solicited assistance from Board Members, USDA Officials, Appalachian Regional Commission officials, and committee members, which allowed them to make substantial progress in correcting and implementing solutions to management problems.

They plan to modify the management structure to make it more responsive to the needs of the community, as well as install a process for evaluation and measurement of their progress.

Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone

benchmark revision strategic plan revision effective benchmarks

In the Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone, while the committee process of benchmarking seemed slow and cumbersome, creative ideas emerged for implementation that had not been considered during the strategic planning process. Most board directors would agree that the Zone would not have been prepared to administer grant funds without the policy-making and benchmarking that occurred during the first year. The University of Illinois Extension Service provided written materials on effective committee meetings that were shared with committee members.

Greater Portsmouth Enterprise Community

benchmarks strategic plan empowerment

The board of the Greater Portsmouth Enterprise Community (Ohio) has adhered to its policy of viewing the strategic plan as an evolutionary document. The plan and its benchmark components are subject to ongoing review to determine if they still meet the needs of the community and if they are addressing them in the most efficient manner possible. This process accommodates changing needs and priorities and has resulted in major revisions to some benchmarks, changes in operating entities, and identification of more appropriate funding sources.

The long range goal for the EC remains as it was stated in the original strategic plan: a sustainable community that offers all its residents the opportunity for education, employment and decent housing within a safe and healthy environment.

Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone

effective benchmarks benchmark revision

The Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone (SIDEZ) discovered that one of the largest obstacles encountered was the length of time it took to develop detailed two-year work plans and enter them into the electronic Benchmark Management System. As goal advisory committees began to meet, it became clear that many of the strategies in the strategic plan were one-line descriptions of proposed activities. Little substantive detail was actually included in the plan about who, when and how the strategies were to be accomplished.

As the committees wrestled with the benchmarking process, it became obvious that some strategies would need to be modified or even postponed. For example, the transportation sub-committee sponsored a presentation on a program called "cars to careers" by a non-profit organization from another region. SIDEZ hopes to establish a similar program, but after learning more about it, committee members realized that none of them or their organizations were able to assume this new program responsibility. A new entity would have to be created or identified to take on this task. As a result, the benchmark needed to be modified.

Watsonville Enterprise Community

vision planning community participation festival

During 1998, In Watsonville Enterprise Community (California), a wide variety of community interests including business, government, agriculture, labor, education, health and environmental stakeholders, came together to conduct a visioning process for the Pajaro Valley. A non-profit agency, Action Pajaro Valley, was formed to initiate and facilitate a number of community outreach activities in order to provide all residents in the Valley with the opportunity to help define the area's vision. The desired outcome of this process was to enhance the quality of life and create tangible, implementable action plans to serve as a guide for leading the community into the future. This process will continue through Spring 2001.

On October 8-10, 1999, Action Pajaro Valley hosted a Vision Festival Weekend for community members of Pajaro Valley. This Festival was one of the initial outreach efforts aimed at involving community members in the creation of a vision for the future of the Valley. The Vision Festival included a range of activities and opportunities for community input and dialogue addressing diverse issues, including business, government, agriculture, education, labor, housing and the environment.

Over 150 people attended the Saturday community workshop. The workshops were designed to identify the main components of community vision, the issues and opportunities facing the Valley, and some strategy ideas for implementing a vision. On Sunday, a Family Festival was held at the Watsonville Plaza. The purpose of this event was to involve families and individuals unable to attend the Saturday workshops. The Plaza contained six interactive booths designed to obtain community input as well as more than 20 resource booths that distributed information regarding local community services.

Vision cards were distributed and collected throughout the weekend. The cards asked participants to identify the three most significant issues facing the Valley in the next 20 years. The cards also asked for the participants' "vision" for the community over the same period.

Key vision points raised throughout the process include the following:

- Create powerful educational opportunities for young people
- Celebrate and capitalize on diversity
- Develop a strong economy
- Have a healthy downtown
- Create a sufficient balance between jobs and housing
- Develop diverse employment opportunities
- Balance agricultural preservation with urban development
- Maintain the agricultural economy
- Create the Valley as a model of organic farming
- Provide mixed use and infill development
- Provide secure, comfortable, safe, and affordable housing for all residents
- Protect environmental resources

Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone

planning survey

Surveys can be useful for gathering input for use in strategic plan and benchmark reviews. Four hundred sixty-nine businesses in the Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone (SIDEZ) were sent a survey to determine their credit needs. Nearly 100 businesses responded. Results of the credit needs assessment will be used to guide the development of SIDEZ business assistance programs and to evaluate the impact of those programs at the end of the 10-year zone designation.

Imperial Valley Enterprise Community

decision-making processes cooperation language barriers

In all planning processes, there are disagreements. The Imperial Valley Enterprise Community found, during its process to develop a Round II Empowerment Zone application and strategic plan, that they were not an exception. Most disagreements dealt with "turf" issues. These were overcome quickly by identifying an overall mission to provide one common goal: to provide the greatest amount of resources to the areas with the greatest amount of social and economic need. Residents and committee members developed consensus through a number of planning workshops held throughout the area. Participants agreed that until the needs of certain areas were met and social, economic, and environmental problems alleviated, the entire county would suffer.

Two of these disagreements were very difficult to bring to resolution, mostly because the planning process and public participation were so intense that community members became impassioned about their favorite projects. In order to respond to the disagreements that developed during the EZ planning process, the Empowerment Zone Planning Committee decided to ask for outside assistance to:

Identify how projects could be evaluated for the Phase I Work Plan; and
Decide who should comprise the evaluation team, which would ultimately choose the projects to be funded with the \$8 million available for the first two years.

The planning committee, along with the lead entity, requested assistance from the state's Empowerment Zone Coordinator. The coordinator and a contract consultant conducted a three-hour workshop, which resulted in resolution of the issues. The solutions were built from strong consensus and achieved by impartial facilitation.

The purpose of the EZ strategic planning process was to incorporate the concerns of developing good ideas and making sure something happens. As one resident said, "This plan must not be a one-time deal. We need a plan that has a long-range vision. In the past we have failed to realize what our potential is, and have been unable to change it. We need to know how to obtain the resources to change it and how to jump-start it. We can have a good future."

In keeping with this, Imperial County recognized that its strategic planning process must attempt to involve those individuals most affected by existing economic and social barriers. The goal was to build a sense of regional "citizenship" so that these individuals would be willing to take a strong ownership of the plan. To accomplish this, they recognized that they would need to:

- Overcome issues of access to the planning process by reaching out to residents in their community through local community workshops. This approach also provided a higher level of comfort for exchanging ideas, identifying specific needs and designing meaningful strategies.
- Overcome issues concerning communication. Many of the residents

- whom the plan needed to address did not speak English.
- Overcome issues dealing with anxiety. Many of the participants vital to the plan had never participated in a strategic planning process.

To achieve optimum results, they devised a public participation plan that included the implementation of four community workshops held throughout the proposed Enterprise Zone boundaries and open to all members of the community; public notices in both Spanish and English and interpreters at each community workshop; key local residents used as facilitators so that residents were more comfortable to share their views and ideas; and focus used to gain insight from specific population groups, individual, and organizations.

The result of these actions was a planning process that had extensive public involvement and participation to frame a vision and plan for the future of Imperial County. Most of the participants expressed that the process was both rewarding and educational.

Planning is challenging work. What matters is to care about the community, to be willing to work with, talk with, and listen to others, and to have a vision. In order to continue developing strategies that improve the environment in which we live, grow and work, it is vital for the people to speak up and work together.

The EZ Round II process certainly revealed the importance of having a community, with the cooperation of their federal, state, and local government, develop strategic plans and implemented by alliances among private, public and nonprofit entities. This process has been successfully implemented in Imperial County and it will continue to be because the community realizes the importance of working together to build a plan that will take them toward a new beginning.

Bowling Green Enterprise Community

youth community photographs

The Bowling Green Enterprise Community (Kentucky) included youth in its strategic plan development. An event was organized with the Boys and Girls Clubs in which the youth were provided with disposable cameras and asked to photograph what they liked best and least about the neighborhood.

Center of North America Coalition REAP Zone

strategic plan amendment benchmark review partnerships communication

The Center of North America Coalition REAP Zone found that one valuable practice for implementing the strategic plan is to have good lines of communication with all of the partners involved on a project and maintaining constant pursuit of that project. A subcommittee of the CONAC board amended the strategic plan to meet new conditions. The CONAC strategic plan is revised once per year.

Metlakatla Indian Enterprise Community

linking strategies

Metlakatla Indian Enterprise Community (Alaska) is using their custom cutting sawmill to make salmon gift boxes. This links closely with the tribal tourism program, as well as their plan to produce even more value-added wood products. Their benchmarks include kiln drying equipment, planners, and additional value added equipment. All of these activities are directed toward establishment of a niche market for Native American products.

Partnerships

Moloka`i Enterprise Community

technical assistance funding project leadership

During the past year, the Moloka`i Enterprise Community (Hawaii) attracted 28 new partners for EC projects. These partners provided or pledged to provide funds, technical support, project leadership, and/or in-kind services. Seventeen of these 28 partners are private entities, while 11 are governmental partners, including federal, state and county agencies.

Middle Rio Grande Enterprise Community

donated resources

In the Middle Rio Grande Enterprise Community (FUTURO) in Texas, most of the partners listed in the EZ/EC application continue to be supportive of the activities FUTURO is undertaking. For example:

- In May 1999, when FUTURO hired its first staff person, the Central Power and Light Company (CPL) offered office space and utilities as an in-kind contribution. This translates into approximately \$17,000 per year savings to FUTURO.
- In December 1999, FUTURO held a benchmark review session and membership drive and CPL donated \$500 toward the expenses of the meeting
- CPL has offered up to \$450 in scholarship money for a comprehensive grant writing course for individuals who cannot afford the tuition of \$150
- CPL has also hosted business prospect meetings.

In addition, FUTURO is:

- Coordinating business expansion and recruitment efforts with local government officials, USDA-Rural Development, and the Texas Department of Economic Development
- Coordinating efforts with Southwest Texas Junior College toward the

- advancement of technology programs and services to EC residents
- Working with Sul Ross Rio Grande College, which has committed to offer leadership courses
- SR-RGC also donated the telephone equipment FUTURO currently uses, they are a partner in the Department of Education-CTC project, and they sponsored Dr. Cyril Svoboda's fee for in-person training on Community Empowerment
- Working with the Middle Rio Grande Development Council in their capacity as operators of the local workforce programs and which, through the Middle Rio Grande Workforce Board, has partnered with FUTURO on the Department of Education-CTC grant for in-kind contributions of approximately \$100,000 per year over the next three years
- Obtained a partnership with the Cotulla Independent School District on the DOE-CTC grant for in-kind contributions of \$32,000 per year over the next three years
- Received the assistance of community based-organizations in each of the five counties in refining the benchmark review.

Lock Haven Enterprise Community

coalitions guidebooks to services service coordination elimination of duplication

In the Lock Haven Enterprise Community (Pennsylvania), the Clinton County Training Office formed the Community Based Planning Group, a committee of community organizations, during 1999. The goal of the group is to strengthen the lines of communication among agencies, business, schools and other programs to provide seamless services that will enable community members to attain personal and professional goals. With the assistance of the Enterprise Community Program and Lock Haven University's AmeriCorps Program, the group is compiling a Web-based directory of human services in Clinton County. A combination of in-kind funding from the University, the Enterprise Community and the Training Office will enable the Group to publish the Web-based directory in the spring of 2000.

Lock Haven Hospital's Rural Health Outreach Program is implementing the State of Pennsylvania's Health Improvement Plan in Clinton County. The first step in this process is to assess the community's resources for health programs. Because the Community Based Planning Group is compiling a list of county services, the Hospital is working with this group to complete the assessment of health resources. The goal of the Hospital's initiative is to prevent duplication of services and to provide a seamless system of services to the community.

Middle Rio Grande Enterprise Community

strategic plan coordination local governments

Middle Rio Grande Enterprise Community (FUTURO) in Texas found one of its best approaches has been coordination with local governments. In one city, the mayor literally used the plan as his blue-print, as it was intended to be. For example, in

regards to the housing goals, he approached the housing authority director, funded in part by the city, and asked for the director to pick one goal and begin trying to find funds to implement it. He approached the superintendent of schools with the same request and took the initiative to formulate plans to attract large corporate businesses. FUTURO assists him in any economic development efforts that he requests and makes staff available to the other FUTURO communities as well.

Greene and Sumter Enterprise Community

technical assistance benchmark review

Greene and Sumter Enterprise Community (Alabama) has formed a new partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, which has volunteered to give input and suggestions regarding the EC's revolving loan fund. A partnership has also been established with the New South Coalition, which includes bankers who have agreed to partner with the EC to leverage funds for the RLF. Family Health Care of Alabama will provide preventive health care workshops and training for the EC area. Once these new benchmarks have been implemented, the new partners will participate in the review process.

Scott-McCreary Enterprise Community

interstate cooperation

As the Nation's only two-state Enterprise Community, Scott County, Tennessee and McCreary County, Kentucky truly erased the state line with the EC designation. Many business and social partnerships existed between Scott County and McCreary Counties prior to the EC designation, but the EC, through its committee system, has strengthened them in a variety of ways, including:

- Local schools systems through attendance and dropout issues and School-to-Work programs
- Reciprocal academic and tuition agreements between Roane State Community College in Tennessee and Somerset Community College in Kentucky
- Agricultural Extension Services in Scott and McCreary County are cooperating in seeking alternate agriculture crops to replace tobacco
- The Job Corps in Pine Knot, Kentucky has opened its doors to clients and residents of Scott County, Tennessee
- They work together to prepare grant applications
- They attend and participate in functions in each county and state to celebrate the individual successes of our partners.

Greater Portsmouth Enterprise Community

benchmark reviews by partners

The Greater Portsmouth Enterprise Community (Ohio) believes its success to date is directly attributable to the community partnerships arising from the strategic plan. This EC may be unique in that the board does not directly operate any of the

projects included in the plan. Implementation of all benchmark activities has been the responsibility of participating partners, who can apply their varied experience and expertise to solving specific problems. As operating entities, the partners directly participate in benchmark review and revision and funding decisions.

Several new significant partnerships were formed in 1999 that have resulted in increased funding and private investment. Public entities contributing to the growth of the EC include the Scioto County Department of Human Services, the federal Department of Labor, the Ohio Department of Development and the Ohio Department of Health. These agencies have contributed in excess of \$3,000,000 in new funding for employment and training, economic development, infrastructure improvement and health care. A new alliance with Horizon Utilities, a private company, has resulted in an expenditure to date of \$960,000 to bring much needed natural gas service to Washington Township. As many as 600 customers will eventually hook into Horizon's service lines. An original partner, OSCO Industries, recently completed a major expansion at its New Boston site at a cost of \$4,000,000 that will create an additional 30 jobs.

Southwest REAP Zone

collaboration success stories

Southwest REAP Zone (North Dakota) regards the development of better relationships among partnering entities within the REAP Zone as its most admirable accomplishment to date. This achievement should have far reaching impact if it can be sustained. Human capital is a major deficiency with the Zone, which is sparsely populated, and the synergy of partners working with common vision can do much to counteract the deficiency in numbers. Documentable outcomes have occurred as a result. It is evident that success stories are very important to the ability of the Zone to reverse the existing paradigm of depopulation and decline within the region.

East Prairie Enterprise Community

resources building support trusting the process

The East Prairie Enterprise Community (Missouri) has learned that if enough partners hear about problems and obstacles, somewhere, there is an answer. Problem solving is learning to trust and to know that networking is itself a solution. The EC is dedicated to working with the Delta Initiative in the belief that working as a region will benefit all. Continuing successful implementation of current projects with partners such as USDA and the state of Missouri allows community-based activities to become successfully implemented. These continued partnerships will, in particular, allow the flood project to continue as well as the Welfare to Work and youth programs implemented at the newly incorporated Susanna Wesley Family Learning Center.

"Partnershiping" is the East Prairie Enterprise Community's very best practice. Their slogan is "It won't hurt to try"! This practice requires establishing guidelines

and then having the courage to trust that the partners to follow the agreed upon plan. The practice then requires the commitment to communicate and to achieve consensus.

The East Prairie Partnership has found a partial solution to overcoming the difficulties of convincing residents to support benchmark activities. It has found that if a core group of residents who share a common interest and conviction explain, involve, and share ideas with other willing partners, enthusiasm spreads. Residents act to win additional converts among their friends and neighbors and state and federal partners. Some examples of this process include the success of the St. Johns Flood Control Project, the Tourism Council, the School Bond Passage, the Cultural Productivity Project, and Technology Transitions.

La Jicarita Enterprise Community

collaboration

In the La Jicarita Enterprise Community (New Mexico), collaborations are continuously developing and will continue in the years to come, due to the structure and life of projects being implemented today. The opportunity to foster, nurture and further strengthen partnerships is always evident in their approaches to consortium building. They continue to strengthen their present posture with all state and federal partners with the anticipation that they recognize the merits of the EC's initiatives and favor them for funding opportunities as a wise investment.

Some of the most recent partnerships and working relationships established with La Jicarita are in the arena of education. Because of their rural geographic location and the strength and emphasis placed on education by the community, they have surrounded themselves with other service providers and educational practitioners who share in a common vision, cradle to grave education awareness and attainment. Partners who share in this vision include the Center for Education of Diverse Populations, an education service provider committed to work with LJEC, Sangre de Cristo Community and School Coalition, and 11 school districts. Kaufman, Coleman, Kellogg and Annenburg Foundations have all supported educational activities in the EC. The New Mexico State Department of Vocational Rehabilitation has also awarded three grants designed to support education and employment opportunities for developmentally disabled youth and adults in the EC area. 1999 was the first year of the Specialized Training and Employment Placement Systems (STEPS) and the second year for the New Mexico Alliance for Supportive Employment (NMASE) projects.

Other project-specific partnerships developed in 1999 include the state-sponsored Small Business Development Centers; this relationship has served as support to the EC's Small Business Development Loan Fund. The network of local banks supporting this initiative has added to their partnerships. A true collaborative effort is evident in their partnerships with New Mexico Rural Waters and Rural Community Assistance Corporation, both of which have made tremendous contributions, along with federal partners from USDA Rural Utility Service. A pivotal relationship has

been established with the New Mexico State University RIPAP project. The technical service provision brought forth by the University is priceless in supporting the EC's agriculture initiative. A key component of this initiative is the partnership developed with the Northern New Mexico Cattleman's Association, a thriving membership of over 500 small-scale farmers and ranchers.

Their participation in the telecommunications arena has also opened doors in the industry. LJEC is now part of the Telecommunications Advisory Group, which deals in advanced technology and telecommunication in Northern New Mexico. This association has led to several proposals seeking funding.

East Prairie Enterprise Community

peer exchanges sharing knowledge peer-to-peer relations

The East Prairie Enterprise Community (Missouri) has become known to other communities for its willingness to partner. In 1999, community leaders received invitations from 20 communities to share ideas on projects and project implementation or to host visiting groups. The topics have ranged from strategic planning to city beautification.

Lock Haven Enterprise Community

problems of success collaboration

Lock Haven Enterprise Community (Pennsylvania) has found that staffing the Expanded ChildCare Program has become one of the program's biggest challenges. With such a strong economy, it has become increasingly difficult to recruit, hire, train and retain staff, given the traditionally low wages paid in the child care field. Collaboration with the Vo-Tech School and area colleges has helped to alleviate some of the problems of finding qualified candidates.