

**Multistate Research Project Proposal**  
Project Number NE-XXX  
**Rural Communities, Rural Labor Markets and Public Policy**  
Proposed Project Duration: From October 1, 2002 to September 30, 2007

**Statement of Issues and Justification**

The future of rural America depends on decisions made by citizens, businesses, in county courthouses, state legislatures, and Congress. While much of the activity is local, many of the challenges and issues are common across the three thousand counties and fifty states. Through formal and informal University and Extension Service planning processes, rural stakeholders have identified four issues important for rural people and places:

1: What are the rural opportunities and threats arising from electronic commerce, financial liberalization, other changes to fixed and delivery costs that affect rural economic activity? These and other "market area" issues are redefining rural private and public sector activity in unprecedented ways.

2: What is happening in rural labor markets and what are the causes and impacts of migration on rural communities? Rural people are seeking to understand how to improve labor market outcomes and to better prepare for changes in age structure and ethnicity and other demographic trends that are altering the face of rural America.

3: What effect does public policy have on rural areas and rural industries? Public policy has important impacts on rural people and places.

4: What are the characteristics of a healthy, successful rural community? Rural leaders are seeking to understand how to revitalize their economies, and are looking for models that will help them decide what investments are most effective in improving rural economic well-being.

These four issue areas have been identified as critical to local development initiatives by citizens, rural development practitioners, policy-makers in government agencies, and professional analysts responsible for monitoring and intervening in rural economies. Successful local development efforts depend on answers to the questions around which we have organized this project.

Objective 1 of the project focuses specifically on rural opportunities in the e-commerce new economy. Mark Drabenstott, Director of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City's Center for the Study of Rural America, has put e-commerce on top of the new agenda for rural America (Drabenstott, 2000). Objective 2 focuses on rural citizens in labor markets, taking into account that these often have important links to urban foci. Objectives 2 and 4 examine Drabenstott's hypothesis that high quality rural life is a prerequisite for well-functioning rural labor markets and economies.

Former USDA Undersecretary Karl Stauber (now President of the Northwest Area Foundation) has expressed concerns that "...today's rural public policy is often urban

policy that is poorly modified to fit nonurban settings” (pg. 34) Objective 3 explicitly considers new farm bill options emphasizing non-farm rural objectives.

The 5 goals of the USDA Rural Development mission area strategic plan all hinge on “improving the quality of life in rural America.”(USDA, 2000;, USDA, 2001) NE-162 Objective 4 explicitly addresses measurement of and policy impacts on, the quality of rural life.

The congruency of these issues identified by citizens and CSREES’s goals; ERS’s lists of priorities; and the issues addressed by the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City Center for Study of Rural America reinforces our motivation to focus on these issues in this multistate research project.

The technical feasibility of this research has been established in previous analyses of global forces and rural economies, rural labor market and migration studies and analyses of rural policy. The research represented in the attached list of publications from the previous NE-162 project establishes much of the empirical and conceptual groundwork for the current project.

Current research is underway on some of these issues, but there is little systematic cross-state collaboration on these four issues. Scientific advances on these topics would help rural community leaders and state and Federal policymakers to design effective strategies for improving economic well-being in rural areas. Collaborators on this project have the technical expertise and experience to make significant progress. *The cross-state collaboration stimulated by a multi-state research project will allow us to draw scientific inference from multiple observations, and to capitalize on regional cross-sectional variation to distinguish commonalities or systematic effects from idiosyncratic outcomes. The regional research project also provides a context for comparing case studies and improving the insights we can gain from them.*

Local and national leaders can use the results of this research not only to understand the forces affecting them, but also to design strategies for strengthening their economies. The potential of this research to have significant impact is strengthened by the connections of the researchers with the Extension Services of the various states and their educational programs for rural leaders and policymakers.

### **Related, Current, and Previous Work**

As a discipline, regional science has addressed a wide range of important public issues such as why some regions grow while others decline, how policies can be crafted to affect change in growth patterns, understanding the driving forces that determine where people and firms elect to locate, and the fiscal and economic consequences of those location choices and growth patterns. A rich and diverse set of applied and theoretical research activities has been undertaken in an attempt to understand growth and locational issues. Unfortunately, as in many of the social sciences, empirical analysis, model development and policy prescriptions have preceded formulation of formal and comprehensive theories of regional economic growth and development. In short, because regional science has, to a large extent, been problem/policy oriented and data-driven the

discipline has tended to be fragmented and piecemeal. Our theoretical framework and data with which to test hypotheses are gravely inadequate.

Despite the lack of a unifying theoretical framework to provide guidance, applied studies of regional issues have occurred in response to the informational needs of federal, state, and local decision makers. . A December 2001 CRIS Search uncovered 97 projects dealing with rural communities and public policy. One-sixth of these were projects associated with the NE-162 project. Over half of the rural community projects involved either agricultural economists studying issues such as public land management or financing agriculture, or were sociological studies of rural areas. Many dealt with welfare reform. None of the non-NE-162 community research projects had the scope of the current proposed project.

A CRIS search also identified 40 research projects dealing with rural labor markets. Over half (26) of the 40 projects were part of two multistate research projects: a terminated multistate research project S-259 “Rural Labor Markets in a Global Economy” and the ongoing successor multistate research project S-296 “Rural Labor Markets: Workers, Firms and Communities in Transition”. The focus of the current S-296 project is migration of labor (particularly foreign-born) into rural communities and the impact of that migration on both indigenous and immigrant labor. This is not being studied in the current proposed project, so there appears to be no overlap between the proposed and the ongoing multistate projects.

Static, comparative and dynamic Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) models have been developed to analyze impact of public policies on regional economies. Fisher and Depotakis (1989) employed a single-region CGE model to estimate the impacts of alternative energy taxes on the California economy. Robinson et al. (1993) estimated economic impacts in the Los Angeles basin from instituting marketable permits to reduce pollution. Kraybill et al. (1992) applied an interregional CGE model to estimate impacts of a national policy change on the Virginia economy. Koh (1991) completed simulation experiments to estimate distributional impacts in the Oklahoma economy from alternative economic development policies. Upadhyaya and Holland (1995) investigated the economic and fiscal impacts in the state of Washington from reduction in state business and occupation tax

Not only do federal and state fiscal policies impact rural economies, but actions by federal or state government in the use and allocation of natural resources greatly impacts rural economic development Berck et al. (1991) applied a static CGE model to estimate the reallocation of surface water in the San Joaquin Valley in California. Seung et al. (1997) demonstrated the advantages of using CGE procedures as oppose to a Social Accounting Matrix for analysis of reallocation of surface waters from agriculture to the Stillwater refuge in the Churchill County, Nevada economy. Goodman (2000) employed a static CGE model of southwestern Colorado to estimate the impacts of a proposed reservoir storage alternative temporary water transfers. The analysis of Berck et al. (1999), Seung et al. (1997), and Goodman (2000) demonstrate how CGE models provide a more realistic portrayal of the impacts of natural resource management scenarios.

However these studies have been completed from a static framework. Application of a dynamic CGE model would enable the intertemporal impacts of natural resource management policies to be derived. Therefore the primary objective of the state of Nevada portion of research for the NE162 project would be an analysis of the application of dynamic CGE modeling for federal and state fiscal and natural resource policies.

In the current and previous NE-162 projects, much was learned about how economic restructuring affected rural communities and disadvantaged populations and how policy affects rural economies and fiscal viability. The publications list of the current NE-162 project, which is attached, lists publications from the first three years of the current project. Project investigators reported one book, 7 book chapters and 73 journal articles (in addition to many institutional publications) stimulated or enabled by their involvement in this regional research endeavor. *Fully one-fifth of these journal articles, for example, were co-authored by investigators from different states. Interstate collaborations such as these are a major way in which this project advances regional economic research in this country.*

Regional economics and regional science research provides a conceptual and empirical underpinning for the work proposed in this project. Kilkenny (1998) and Kraybill (1998) summarize the theoretical foundations for research examining how economic activity organizes across rural and urban areas. Barkley et.al. (1999), Fawson et al (1998) and Wagner and Deller (1998) examine the impact of restructuring on rural economies, and pose questions about economic stability that will be addressed in the proposed project. Jensen et al. (1999), Ngarembe et al (1998), Shields et al (1999) and Mills (2000) examine the impact of economic restructuring on rural disadvantaged populations. Barkley and Henry (2000), Cooke (1998), Davis and Weber (1998), Rainey and McNamara (1999) and Seung and Kraybill (1999) examine in different ways how economic and social policy affects rural areas.

This research has identified areas requiring further investigation. Particularly important gaps are in the knowledge of the sources and impacts of restructuring due to changes in electronic commerce and financial intermediation. The previous literature has also identified needs for a better understanding of the rural labor market participation of disadvantaged populations, and in the functioning of labor markets. The proposed research will follow the lead of Henry, Barkley and Bao (1997) and Renkow and Hoover (2000) in examining how occupational change, poverty, and migration in rural areas are affected by proximity and functioning of urban economies. Previous research has also failed to provide helpful guidelines for rural areas about the factors affecting rural quality of life and economic sustainability. Proposed research on keystone sectors is one way in which the proposed project will address this gap. Finally, proposed regional research involving the COMPAS (COMMunity Policy Analysis System) model will address the spatial modeling shortcomings of research on the impacts of sprawl and the dynamics of land use.

## **Objectives**

**Objective 1:** To better understand the emerging opportunities and threats to the economic structure of nonmetropolitan communities arising from forces that change the size or structure of rural markets. We focus on electronic commerce, financial liberalization, and health care.

**Objective 2:** To determine the root causes of changes in rural labor markets, the employment and demographic growth that are likely to occur in the future, and the degree to which these factors are modified by workforce development policies.

**Objective 3:** To understand the effects of public policy on rural areas and rural industries.

**Objective 4:** To identify community characteristics associated with viable and healthy rural communities and investigate policy alternatives to enhance these characteristics.

## **Methods**

Each of the four objectives has specific research methods and procedures.

### **Objective 1: Rural Restructuring: E-Commerce, Financial Liberalization, and Health Care**

#### *1: E-Commerce*

E-commerce is the application of the Internet to business purposes and comprises an evolving bundle of business activities that range from presenting a catalog of merchandise or buying at an electronic auction to highly sophisticated automatic information systems connecting firms that adhere to common information standards. There are three main types of electronic commerce links: business-business, called B2B, business-consumer, called B2C; and telecommuting.

The NE-162 research on e-commerce will address four information needs. One is the documentation or benchmarking of the current spatial structures of nonmetropolitan economies. This information will be valuable for later tests of “before/after.” Two, we will hypothesize and study the emerging opportunities, new optimal spatial patterns, and new types of spatial interactions made possible by e-commerce. Three, we will attempt to identify the types of activities that may be made redundant by e-commerce. And finally, we will try to anticipate the net effects of e-commerce on rural vitality.

One research effort at USDA will analyze what the effect is, and is expected to be, of e-commerce on farms. Another effort (Iowa State) will investigate how retail market areas may be affected. While we do not know the net outcome, B2C commerce could effect a whole new central place hierarchy.

#### *2: Financial Liberalization*

Because information and trust are critical to both deposit and loan contracts, banking services may continue to be subject to steep spatial decay. People may continue to deposit their money with-and get loans from-local bankers who they know and who know them (American Bankers Association, 1994). One of the NE-162 research efforts (Iowa State) will explain the spatial extent of commercial bank markets. Will community bankers continue to play key roles in local economic development? Or will rural communities trade the benefits of lower cost/higher return financial services for the loss of key local intermediaries? The NE-162 research into these issues (Clemson, Utah State, Delaware, Iowa State) will describe how credit and equity markets are evolving in response to new technological and economic forces, and will indicate the implications for rural economic and community vitality.

### *3: Health Care*

The transition of hospitals and clinics from public, not-for-profit status to private may encourage the spatial consolidation of health service provision. The most pronounced effects are concentrated in rural communities. The high cost of insurance, information asymmetries, and expensive medical technology converge to create a variety of market inefficiencies that have precipitated increased government involvement in the market for health care services. There is a rising concern about the long-term viability and opportunity for improvement of rural health care systems. To address this issue we propose a comprehensive review of at least one state's (Utah) rural health markets and an analysis of the effectiveness of government initiated policies. We will also investigate how rural citizens perceive trade-offs between access to health care relative to other rural amenities. A careful assessment of market structure is also critical to understanding why public policies designed to alleviate stress in the rural health care market are often ineffective.

### **Objective 2: Rural Labor Markets**

Research on rural labor markets falls into three categories: (1) labor market function; (2) linkages between demographic and employment growth; and (3) labor market responses to policy interventions.

1. Research in Arizona, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Oregon will focus on the structure and function of rural labor markets and worker adjustment in a changing economy. Researchers in Minnesota, North Carolina, Oregon, and Arizona will investigate the structure and function of rural labor markets and worker adjustment in a changing economy. Research in Minnesota will focus on the impact of job growth on employment stability and the level of earnings in rural areas of the upper Midwest. In North Carolina, researchers will analyze how rural employment growth is allocated among current residents, new residents (in-migrants), and non-resident commuters. Researchers in Oregon will conduct a national study of the stability of rural employment and its impact on rural poverty. Research in Arizona will focus on employment changes by industry and occupation in rural Southwestern communities. Research in Michigan will explore current human resource management practices in agriculture and small businesses, and identify successful practices and their organizational context. This

research contributes to reducing labor related risk and improving the competitive position of rural businesses by promoting the adoption of successful human resource management strategies.

2. Research in Arizona, North Dakota, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Colorado, Oregon, and Virginia will investigate issues of workplace choice and residential choice. One of the more striking demographic phenomena of the past few decades has been the large number of rural communities that have experienced significant population growth. Explanations of this “non-metropolitan turnaround” requires consideration of both rural employment conditions and the factors that affect household residential choices, including the function of housing markets and individual preferences for amenities.

One set of studies will focus on inter-relationships between population growth and employment growth in rural communities. Research in Arizona will examine simultaneous employment growth and population growth in newly formed micropolitan communities of rural Arizona and Colorado. Research in North Dakota will analyze the determinants of in-migration into rural North Dakota and Nebraska, with special emphasis on the role of processing factories. In Rhode Island, researchers will investigate the causes of population and employment movement between towns in the Northeast, and will develop forecasts of future residential and employment growth. Researchers in Virginia will analyze the impacts on rural poverty and inequality of employment growth, capital investment, and population growth.

Another set of studies will focus on economic issues related to migration and worker mobility. In North Carolina, research will examine the linkages between commuting and migration in the Southeast to test the degree to which rural population growth is determined by the geographic expansion of urban labor markets. Research in Colorado will analyze the impact of in-migration on labor markets, housing markets, and the demand for public services. In Oregon, Colorado, and North Carolina, researchers will investigate the spatial dynamics of the farm workforce, as well as settlement patterns of migrant farm workers.

3. Researchers from Virginia, Oregon, Minnesota, and South Carolina will conduct a number of policy studies with a national orientation aimed at linking federal and state initiatives to rural labor market outcomes. Policies that have significantly modified the nation’s social safety net are likely to have important, but as of yet poorly documented, impacts on rural citizens. Researchers in Virginia will study the impact of welfare reform on rural labor markets. Researchers in Minnesota, Oregon and Virginia will analyze the impact of child care subsidies on rural workforce participation and employment stability. *Cross-state comparisons will investigate the impact of different state policies on workforce outcomes.* Researchers in South Carolina will assess the impacts that changes in AFDC/TANF caseloads have had on rural labor markets.

### **Objective 3: : Impacts of policy on rural areas and industries**

Public policy has important impacts on rural people and places. The Farm Bill, for example, affects rural economies as well as farms. Federal and state policy in recent years

has devolved to lower levels of government. This has important implications for public sector revenues and finance, changes in federal natural resource policy, deregulation of electricity, E-governance and digital democracy, and infrastructure. Work in these areas will focus on two dimensions of our understanding of public policy and rural areas. First researchers will enhance the depth, accuracy and availability of economic and fiscal policy impact tools for rural areas. Second researchers will explore the application of these tools to various rural policy issues.

Researchers in Missouri, Pennsylvania, Kansas, Kentucky and Minnesota will focus on the further development of the COMPAS (COMmunity Policy Analysis System) type of economic/fiscal impact tool. COMPAS models will be extended to new states including Kentucky and Minnesota. The basic COMPAS model will be improved by reestimating current versions of the models with data from the 2000 census and from recently adopted data standards. At the same time, researchers will work to improve the spatial and dynamic features of the models by employing more sophisticated econometric tools (time-series and spatial econometrics for example). Models will be embellished by adding modules for housing, environment, welfare systems and retail trade. Pennsylvanian and Missouri researchers will experiment and test ways of measuring model performance. *Researchers in Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Nevada and Idaho will develop, compare and alternative and complementary types of policy impact measurement tools such as Computable General Equilibrium models, input-output models and others.*

The second dimension of work under this objective is application of these models. Much of the focus of these applications will be on the fiscal impacts of policy change on local governments. But researchers in Texas and Kansas will lead efforts to improve the role of data, information and policy analysis in local government decision-making. One project will begin with a comparison of state and local expenditures and taxes across all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Participating states will draw on a common data base to show how their state compares with all other states. Specific obstacles for local government will be identified. Policy alternatives will be presented. Economic and fiscal impact models will be used to evaluate the impact of policy alternatives on local governments. The models will also be used to evaluate the impact of economic and demographic changes on local governments.

Other applications of the policy analysis tools include an assessment of the fiscal benefits and costs of changing land use (Kentucky, Missouri, Minnesota, Colorado and Arizona), targeted industrial development (Kansas and Missouri), and agriculture policy and structural change (Kansas, Colorado, and Missouri).

The Community Policy Analysis Network, a national network of researchers looking at *the local impact of national policies*, will be involved in this research effort and will be strengthened by the project efforts. In collaboration with this CPAN network, *project investigators will look at the impacts of alternative policies on rural people and places on a cross-state comparative basis.*

#### **Objective 4: Healthy Rural Communities**

Research on local characteristics associated with healthy and sustainable rural communities has four principal components: determinants of community development, impacts of development on nonmetro areas, importance of local quality of life, and role of social capital in development.

1. Researchers from Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Wisconsin will attempt to identify the determinants or key factors associated with recent rural community growth. Carlino-Mills type models provide the framework for jointly analyzing local population and employment change, the interaction between employment and population growth, and exogenous factors that may influence the availability of jobs, residential growth, or both. These models will be used by the researchers to examine the roles of local attributes (labor quality, environmental and natural resource endowments, public services and infrastructure, education, information technology, functional specialization, external economies, social networks, and quality of life) on community prospects for employment and population growth. Of special interest is the identification of the determinants of growth for rural communities that have been relatively successful in transitioning from traditional economics bases (agriculture, mining, or manufacturing) to new economic bases (services, trade, recreation/tourism/retirement, value-added agriculture) and transitioning from old technologies and market structures to the “new economy”. *Comparisons of research findings from the principal census regions [Northeast (PA, DE), South (SC, GA), Midwest (OH, WI, KS, IN), and West (AZ, CO)] will provide insights on the roles of regional characteristics and path dependencies (economic histories) on rural development options.*

Labor quality and productivity are critical components of rural economic growth as production processes become more technologically sophisticated and new information technologies and e-commerce are more widely adopted. Recent research suggests that rural businesses have experienced difficulty in finding workers with the required education and training. Researchers in Indiana, Kansas, and South Carolina will investigate the relationship between labor productivity and rural income levels and employment change. Research also will attempt to identify the local and regional attributes that influence labor quality and productivity, such as educational investment, economic structure, infrastructure, and location.

Insights from research on the determinants of firm and community growth will be used by researchers in developing employment generation strategies for rural areas. Industry targeting methodologies will be developed and tested for Kansas, Ohio, Nevada, South Carolina, Georgia, and Wisconsin. The targeting methodologies in Wisconsin, Ohio and Nevada will focus on local retail and service sectors. Market threshold and trade flow analysis will be conducted as key steps in identifying local trade and service sectors with high potential for supporting new businesses. Kansas and South Carolina will refine targeting methodologies that focus on basic or exporting sectors in rural communities. The Kansas and Georgia methodologies will be based on local comparative advantage as identified by modeling past industry location patterns. The South Carolina methodology

attempts to identify local industry clusters and focus employment generation strategies on these clusters and related industries. *The alternative approaches developed by Kansas and South Carolina will be compared to determine complementarities and applicability to different types of rural communities.*

2. Many rural communities, especially those in the South, West, or near metropolitan areas, are experiencing rapid economic and population growth. Researchers from Michigan, Colorado, North Carolina, Indiana, Delaware, and Ohio will focus on developing models to predict the spatial patterns of growth and the implications for land use change in rural communities. In addition, researchers will investigate the role of rapid growth on the availability of resources for agriculture; price of agricultural land; environmental quality; availability, quality, and costs of public services; and conflicts between residents and newcomers. Research goals are to identify alternative government policies for influencing the patterns of growth and for financing the additional public infrastructure and services required by growth. Of special interest is research on the effectiveness of alternative policies to preserve prime agricultural lands (e.g., use-value taxation) and the public costs and benefits associated with such policies. Community and Fiscal Impact Modeling Systems (COMPAS) developed by NE-162 researchers will be used to estimate the demographic, labor market, and public service impacts associated with alternative growth and public policy scenarios.

3. The importance of local “quality of life” has received much attention in rural economic development research because it is perceived as one community characteristic in which rural areas may have a competitive advantage over urban areas. Of interest to researchers are the factors that constitute local quality of life and policy alternatives for enhancing it. Researchers at Wisconsin and Arizona will estimate hedonic pricing models with the goal of identifying the important attributes of local quality of life and developing quality of life measures or rankings for rural counties. Researchers in Rhode Island will use multi-attribute contingent choice (conjoint) analysis to assess (1) implications of development and conservation activities and the welfare of rural residents, (2) optimal techniques and institutions for sustaining valued rural amenities in particular policy contexts. Such measures could be included as explanatory variables in the previously described community growth models. Research at New Hampshire and South Carolina will investigate the roles of health care and public education in community quality of life and sustainability. Healthcare issues critical to rural areas include the identification of factors critical to the viability of rural healthcare providers and facilities, the potential for additional assisted living facilities to service an aging rural population, and the impact of federal and state government policies on the availability of healthcare services in rural areas. Educational research will investigate whether school quality is related to community growth, and if so, how do improvements in local schools influence the local economy. Two hypotheses will be tested: (a) good schools improve labor quality and thus help business attraction and development; or (b) good schools attract residents who stimulate job growth in the service and trade sectors.

4. The presence of social capital is viewed as critical to sustainable community economic development, yet researchers are not in agreement regarding how to measure social capital or how to enhance it through public policy. Researchers at Iowa State,

Missouri, Ohio State, Oregon State, Texas A&M and Wisconsin will conduct community-level surveys to identify “keystone sectors” in a sample of rural communities. The “keystone” surveys permit the identification of community organizations or entities on which numerous sectors in the community rely for information or support. The methodology also provides measures of the strength of these inner-community bonds. *A comparison of economic development experiences among the sample communities and for each sample community over time would enable researchers to test the dependence of a town’s economic outcome on its’ social networks. Researchers at Iowa State, Virginia Tech, and Michigan State will continue their efforts to determine the role social capital plays in the success of specific community development efforts.*

The use of new decision tools to enhance the capacity of local leaders also will be investigated. Missouri and Minnesota will investigate the role advanced communication technologies and on-line extension programs play in economic development. Researchers at Kentucky will focus on analyzing the role of local economic development strategies in community growth and development.

Researchers in Rhode Island and Georgia have been incorporating the use of expert systems delivered over the World Wide Web as a way to disseminate research findings to clients. The research results from sub-objectives 1 and 2 are particularly suitable for future work. For example, Georgia currently employs SAS/Internet software to generate shift-share analysis for users who submit parameters, including county names and years, by an html form. The server software responds with a tailor-made report presented in the client’s web browser. Client requested statistics retained on the server will be analyzed in an additional effort research. The purpose of this research would be two-fold: (a) to identify the determinants of the choice process that led local government officials to use this web technology, and (b) to identify the conditions or situations that led to improved policy outcomes by increasing the incorporation of policy relevant knowledge into the policy making process.

## **Measurement of Progress and Results**

One of the primary functions of the annual meetings is to encourage cross-state comparisons of results and uncover potential research collaborations. The publications history of the current and previous projects indicates that the project has been quite successful in promoting cross-state collaboration and exploiting the fact of variation in economic and social conditions among states to generate new knowledge about policy impacts and options. The proposed project would make the cross-state integration of research findings a central element of each annual meeting, and would encourage formation of writing teams to extract new knowledge from cross-state comparisons around each of the project objectives.

## **Outputs**

Each annual report of the project will identify

- Cross-state similarities and differences findings from project research
- Research publications that trace the progress of the set of standardized tools.

- Extension publications and educational programs developed out of the project that help local policymakers understand how their economies function, and how those economies can be strengthened and help national policymakers understand the local and national implications of policy changes.

### *Outcomes*

There are many improved outcomes from regional collaboration in the form of shared research protocols and improved conceptual bases of the research that are difficult to quantify. There are three particular outcomes from the proposed project that are concrete, and that would not be possible without the proposed project:

- **A strengthened national network of policy analysts to examine specific policies affecting rural areas.** The project will support a network of scientists from all over the country who can examine local impacts of proposed national policies in ways that can be summarized to show how rural impacts differ depending on local economic conditions and circumstances.
- **A set of standardized social, economic and fiscal impact assessment tools for analyzing the impacts of change in rural communities.** The project will allow scientists from around the country to work together to develop a standardized set of assessment tools for local economic and fiscal analysis
- **Publications and educational materials for local policymakers that will help them understand how to strengthen their economies, and mitigate the negative impacts of policies and forces outside their control.** Many of the project investigators have split appointments (research and extension). This fortunate circumstance means that the research results will be distilled into publications and educational programs that will be used by local decision makers.

There are no relevant milestones for this project.

### **Projected Participation**

FTE	Last Name	First	University	Department
.1	Adamson	Bill	South Dakota State Univ.	Dept. of Economics
.1	Alwang	Jeff	Virginia Tech. Univ.	Dept of Agricultural & Applied Economics
.45	Barkley	David	Clemson University	Dept of Agricultural & Applied Economics
.1	Bitsch	Vera	Michigan State University	Dept. of Agricultural Economics
.1	Cooke	Steve	University of Idaho	Dept of Ag Economics & Rural Sociology
.1	Coupal	Roger	University of Wyoming	Dept of Agricultural & Applied Economics
.1	Davis	Elizabeth	University of Minnesota	Department of Applied

		(Liz)		Economics
.1	Deller	Steve	University of Wisconsin, Madison	Dept of Ag & Applied Economics
.1	Drabenstott	Mark	Federal Reserve Bank, Kansas City	Ctr for Study for Rural America
.1	Fawson	Chris	Utah State Univ.	Dept of Economics
.25	Findeis	Jill	Penn State University	Dept of Ag Economics & Rural Sociology
.1	Foster	Howard Jr.	University of Rhode Island	Dept of Community Planning
.1	Francis	Joseph	Cornell University	Dept of Agricultural Economics
.1	Freshwater	David	University of Kentucky	Dept of Agricultural Economics
.1	Goetz	Stephan	Penn State University	Dept of Agricultural Economics
.1	Harris	Tom	University of Nevada, Reno	Dept of Applied Economics & Statistics
.1	Hastings	Stephen	University of Delaware	Dept of Food & Resource Economics
.25	Henry	Mark	Clemson University	Dept of Agricultural & Applied Economics
.1	Holland	David	Washington State University	Dept of Ag Economics
.1	Irwin	Elena	Ohio State University	Department of Agricultural, Environmental and Development Economics
.1	Isserman	Andrew	University of Illinois	Dept of Ag and Consumer Economics
.1	Jansen	Edmund Jr	University of New Hampshire	Dept of Resource Ec & Development
.1	Johnson	Tom	University of Missouri-Columbia	Dept of Ag Economics
.1	Johnston	Robert	University of Rhode Island	Dept of Resource Economics
.1	Kalambokidis	Laura	University of Minnesota	Department of Applied Economics
.1	Keith	John	Utah State University	Dept of Economics
.1	Kilkenny	Maureen	Iowa State Univ.	Dept of Economics
.1	Kraybill	David	Ohio State University	Department of Agricultural, Environmental and Development Economics
.1	Kriesel	Warren	University of Georgia	Dept of Agricultural & Applied Economics
.1	Leatherman	John	Kansas State University	Dept of Agricultural Economics

.1	Leistritz	Larry	ND State Univ.	Dept of Agricultural Economics
.1	Loveridge	Scott	Michigan State Univ.	Dept of Agricultural Economics
.1	Manalo	Alberto	University of New Hampshire	Dept of Resource Ec & Development
.1	McConnon	Jim	University of Maine	Dept of Agricultural Economics
.1	McDowell	George	Virginia Tech.	Dept of Agricultural and Applied Economics
.1	McNamara	Kevin	Purdue University	Dept of Agricultural Economics
.1	Morris	Doug	Univ. of NH	Dept of Resource Ec. & Development
.2	Morse	George	Unviersity of Minnesota	Dept of Applied Economics
.1	Mulligan	Gordon	University of Arizona	Department of Geography and Regional Planning
.1	Rainey	Daniel	Univ. of Arkansas-Fay.	Dept of Ag Economics and Agribusiness
.1	Renkow	Mitch	North Carolina State University	Dept of Ag and Resource Economics
	Rossi	Daniel	Rutgers University	New Jersey Ag Experiment Station
.1	Schmidt	Fred	Unversity of Vermont	Center for Rural Issues
.1	Scorsone	Eric	University of Kentucky	Department of Ag. Economics
.1	Shields	Martin	Penn State University	Dept of Ag Economics & Rural Sociology
.1	Smith	Steve	Penn State University	Dept of Ag Economics & Rural Sociology
.1	Stallmann	Judith	Texas A&M University	Dept of Agricultural Economics
.1	Stenberg	Peter	USDA	ERS-RED
.33	Thilmany	Dawn	Colorado State University	Dept. of Ag and Resource Economics
.1	Tyrrell	Timothy	University of Rhode Island	Dept of Resource Economics
.1	Weber	Bruce	Oregon State University	Dept of Ag & Resource Economics

### **Outreach Plan**

The project will engage in outreach to the scientific community, the policy community and local citizens and decision makers.

- Project investigators will extend the research results and seek professional input into their research at professional meetings of the American Agricultural Economics Association and of several regional science associations (Southern

Regional Science Association, Western Regional Science Association, Midcontinent Regional Science Association, North American Regional Science Association), and through associated journals. Topic sessions will be organized for professional meetings.

- Outreach to the policy community will be facilitated by close affiliation of various project members with Rural Policy Research Institute, the Community Policy Analysis Network, and the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City's Center for the Study of Rural America, their state legislators and the various state associations of county officials.
- Many project investigators have appointments in the Cooperative Extension System. This linkage will allow for direct input from and feedback to economic development stakeholders. At each project meeting, there will be an agenda item that focuses on the local use of the project tools and findings.
- Significant research and policy results will be shared with stakeholders via publications, reports, meetings, web sites, clientele training and policy and technical briefs.

## **Organization and Governance**

This project has organized itself under a streamlined structure. A chair and secretary are elected each year for one year terms. The chair and secretary are eligible for reelection. The secretary keeps minutes and membership rosters (which are on the project website), and also serves as chair-elect and succeeds the chair. Members carry out their agreed upon research and report on their progress at the annual meeting. Progress reports for each state are available on the project website: <http://www.its.uidaho.edu/scooke/ne-162.htm>. Because membership is very stable and past chairs provide ongoing project guidance for new leadership, project continuity is assured.

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