Western Rural Development Center
Hosted by Utah State University
The Western Rural Development Center (WRDC) is one of four regional centers funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Services (CSREES) to strengthen the capacity of local citizens to guide the future of their rural communities. Each Center links the research and extension capacity of regional land-grant universities with local decision-makers to address a wide range of rural development issues.

The WRDC also receives substantial support from Utah State University from Cooperative Extension; the Agricultural Experiment Station, and the College of Natural Resources.

Any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Agriculture or Utah State University. The WRDC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability or veteran status.

Western Rural Development Center
Utah State University
8335 Old Main Hill
Logan UT 84322-8335
(435) 797-9732
wrdc@usu.edu
http://wrdc.usu.edu

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WRDC Staff

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Mission and Philosophy

The WRDC collaborates with its partners to promote excellence in research, education and extension of western land-grant institutions. The Center contributes to the quality of life in the rural West as a catalyst, a convener, and a conduit.
I am very excited to be a part of the Western Rural Development Center. I became the full-time Director of the WRDC on July 1, 2008. It soon became apparent to me that I was a part of a talented team of professionals who were currently at the Center. It is a great pleasure for me to work with them.

Our goal at the WRDC is to improve the quality of life of residents of the rural west. Numerous other individuals and organizations are trying to accomplish these same goals. By working together, each of us is able to accomplish much more than any of us could alone. We appreciate the opportunity to work with land-grant universities and other partners in seeking solutions to the problems facing the rural west.

The WRDC has several flourishing ongoing programs that are briefly outlined in this annual report. These include the Community-Business Matching Model, eCommerce Training, and the especially successful Entrepreneurial Sustainable Agriculture DVD. These programs will continue to benefit the residents and communities of the rural west and we are seeking means of effectively extending these programs to an even wider audience.

Numerous problems and concerns continue to plague rural America. Compared to metropolitan residents, the residents of nonmetropolitan America, on average, have lower incomes, are more likely to live in poverty, and are more likely to be unemployed or under-employed. Rural residents tend to have lower levels of education; they have more health problems and generally live shorter lives.

Current trends such as higher energy costs and economic restructuring are especially problematic for rural residents and tend to greatly exacerbate these concerns.

As we look toward the future, we at the WRDC are committed to work with our partners in seeking solutions to these problems. For example, the WRDC has recently become involved in several initiatives that seek energy solutions that not only reduce energy costs, but may, in fact, bring jobs to rural areas.

Additionally, we are organizing a strategic planning meeting for early 2009 that will bring together professionals and specialists from throughout the west to help us identify and focus on those issues that are most pressing.

We look forward to working with each of you in the future. We invite you to contact us with feedback, insights or concerns that will help us to more effectively reach our goals.

Sincerely,

Don E. Albrecht
Director
Catalyzing

As a catalyst, the WRDC initiates projects by bringing resources and people together to jump-start innovative concepts.

Convening

Conveying
The Community-Business Matching (CBM) Model provides a framework that communities can use to prioritize their economic development goals and identify the assets they have to help them achieve their goals. The CBM model fits these goals and assets to business profiles in order to determine development decisions that reflect the desires of community members.

Any group of people with a common interest in an economic development project or site can use CBM. It provides information for the community to make decisions about which types of industries to retain or attract. Specifically, CBM will provide:

1) A framework for good decision-making.
2) Extensive information gathered from businesses throughout the U.S. about their site selection decisions and the benefits they bring to communities.
3) Specialized software that can be used to access this data quickly.

To date the CBM multistate program has been applied in Montana and Nevada. In the state of Montana, two applications have been made. The first approach was at the local community level at Anaconda, Montana. This is an EPA Superfund site where economic development alternatives are limited. The Anaconda economic development group was able to use the results of the CBM process to elicit a strategic economic development plan and successfully recruit two industries.

The second application in Montana was a four county regional approach. Usually counties have difficulty forming economic development strategies; however, the CBM approach provided a vehicle for these four counties to easily develop a regional development plan and has allowed location of firms with little political difficulties.

In the state of Nevada, the CBM approach was applied to the border communities of Bullhead City, Arizona and Laughlin, Nevada. The communities were impacted by the closure of the Mohave Power Plant. The CBM approach again led to a regional approach to economic development and the successful and targeted relocation of firms to the new local industrial district.

In the coming year the Community-Business Matching team plans to complete two training projects. First, is a workbook covering the CBM process. The second is a train-the-trainer workshop on the CBM process.

CBM Project Team
Tom Harris
University of Nevada-Reno
Barbara Andreozzi
Montana State University
Linda Cox
University of Hawaii

![Image of people using a computer]

**Community-Business Matching Model**

An online interactive tool for Extension Specialists

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Any group of people with a common interest in an economic development project or site can use CBM.
eCommerce Western Style

Blending hands-on learning with training segments provided by successful entrepreneurs, our eCommerce trainings deliver practical tools participants can begin using immediately.

Rural business people and practitioners in the western U.S. know to be competitive they must become more proficient in upgrading their Internet sophistication and capabilities as well as their knowledge in how to market their business from their website. Seeing a need for training in the western U.S. and in keeping with the spirit of WRDC as Catalyst, the Center launched its eCommerce Training in 2006.

Our eCommerce curriculum was developed by Jim Goodwin, WRDC Senior Program Officer, in collaboration with Utah State University’s Associate Vice President of Information Technology, Eric Hawley.

Jim says that “Community development projects are critical to the rejuvenation and stability of communities in the rural west, and such projects can take months and years to complete. eCommerce, on the other hand, is an important community development tool that can be put to use the day after participants complete the WRDC’s two-day eCommerce Workshop. The training’s Internet and eCommerce knowledge can be applied immediately.”

Workshop participants include small business owners, university Extension specialists, and practitioners. Each is encouraged to bring their laptop with them so they can follow along with the instructors.

The training includes three main learning segments plus a regional keynote speaker and a local panel of successful eCommerce business owners. The panel and the speaker share best practices and they discuss their websites and eCommerce businesses, what works, what doesn’t and how they have successfully used eCommerce to grow their business.

Our training faculty is highly experienced. They cover most of the major aspects of eCommerce. One of our participants put it succinctly, “The instructor was excellent. He knew his stuff and how to share it. Can’t believe the two days flew by so quickly.”

This past year the WRDC worked with Dan Clark at Montana State University Extension and Mary Schmidt from the University of Idaho Extension to produce eCommerce trainings for Horizons Communities in their respective states.

Clark and Schmidt both felt the eCommerce workshops delivered to their participants a high level of training and expertise that simply is not available to them.

Funded by the Northwest Area Foundation (St. Paul, MN), the Horizons Community program is a community leadership program aimed at reducing poverty in rural and reservation communities with populations of 5,000 or fewer and with histories of economic decline and significant population change.

“In rural areas, we know that most of those jobs [living wage jobs] will come through the entrepreneurial start-up or small business expansion. Thus, the assistance provided through WRDC is imperative to meeting the needs of rural communities in addressing poverty.” – Mary Schmidt, University of Idaho Extension and Idaho Horizons Project Director

“Best two days I have spent in a long time.” – 2008 Montana Participant
eCommerce Learning Segments

Planning for eCommerce
Teaches you how to build your online presence. Essentially the e-vehicle that you use to sell your product, service, or event online.
Discover the importance of creating your internal marketing strategy that will guide you through effectively planning a website; choosing web features and tools; website design; consumer service; selection of domain names; web content; colors; wording; graphics; pictures; and a web mapping exercise.

eCommerce Technology
Focuses on the technical how-to’s of eCommerce.
Learn how to create websites and how to get a domain name.
Unravel web-hosting features; how to prepare digital photos for the web; how to create shopping carts and accept payments; and how to implement tools such as e-mail, chat rooms, blogs and/or forums.

Online Marketing Strategies
It’s been said that “If you build it they will come,” but now that you have created your website, how do you get customers to visit it?
Learn how to get the most out of search engine optimization.
Discover web advertising do’s and don’ts’.
Harness the power of marketing through e-mail, pay-per-click models, and more.

“What I liked best about this training is that it was hands on, and we actually learned how to apply the skills we learned.”
— 2008 Montana Participant

“[With the skills I gained at the training] I plan to train my community on getting involved in eCommerce.”
— 2008 Idaho Participant
As a convener, the WRDC brings eclectic groups of people together to learn about issues, learn about one another’s values and goals, and think creatively about how to shape the kind of West that we can all call home.
Demographic and economic changes in the rural West give rise to community development challenges. To assist the region in adapting to these changes, the Multistate Coordinating Committee, known as WERA 1005, provides a platform for focused community development leading to strengthened rural economies.

The Committee links Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, Missouri, Nevada, Utah, Washington and Wyoming in a combined effort to further community development in rural areas. The Committee will conduct research, convene multistate collaborations, develop and disseminate extension curricula and collaborate on future funding proposals.

During this past year the committee conducted studies on the impacts of NxLevel on developing entrepreneurs in rural areas. Additionally, John C. Allen (USU) and Peter Korsching (ISU) have completed studies investigating macroentrepreneurs and their article, “Community Leaders, Business Ownership and Support of Entrepreneurship Development: The Role of Macroentrepreneurs,” was published in Community Development: Journal of the Community Development Society, Vol. 38, No. 4, Winter 2007.

What is WERA?
Western Education/Extension and Research Activity (WERA) is defined by the Western Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors as activities that “serve to integrate two or more functions (i.e., education, extension and research) on a particular topic where multistate coordination or information exchange is appropriate; have expected outcomes; convey knowledge; and are peer reviewed.”

The Association goes further to define the work of WERA committees as follows:

- Fully integrated research, education and extension program coordination with clearly defined, impact oriented objectives, where results are effectively embodied in educational efforts to assist those in need.
As a conduit, the Center enhances the capacity of rural western communities to improve quality of life, sustain local cultures, develop desirable assets, seize emerging opportunities, and solve problems.
The WRDC solicited grant proposals for its Rural Development and Natural Resources Research Mini-Grant Program, and the review committee selected “When Art Meets the Land: A Social and Economic Assessment of a Regional Cultural Tourism Program.”

This research will utilize the community capitals framework to assess the impact of a regional cultural tourism program in north central Idaho. The program, Two Degrees Northwest (2DNW), uses a three-pronged approach to place-based economic development, similar to the HandMade in America model. This includes:

- Asset Identification
- Community Development and Entrepreneurship
- Marketing

Principal Investigator:
Lorrie Higgins
University of Idaho

Collaborators:
Mark Beauchamp
Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc.

Elizabeth Carney
University of Idaho Extension

Department of Community and Rural Sociology
Washington State University

The research objectives for this project include:

- Measure the economic impact to help the organization adapt and focus on program components and marketing tools, as well as contribute to the current body of knowledge about cultural tourism and its role as a rural development strategy for the West.

- Establish a comprehensive data set of regionalized projections so that the organization can benchmark its efforts against economic data, assess past economic trending, and provide detailed case studies for comparison to other regional economic development efforts.

- Assess overall impact of the project on communities and the quality of life for residents of the region and the relative impact of this regional approach to rural development compared to other community and county focused programs.

- Use data collected for this research as an empirical test of the “creative economy” and “education” theories of development as they apply to the rural West.

2DNW
Based in north central Idaho and eastern Washington, and places in between 47 and 49 degrees latitude, Two Degrees Northwest: Where Art Meets the Land works to create a place-based economy, where dollars are firmly tied to heritage, culture, landscape, and community. Our approach fosters regional thinking, entrepreneurship, and community and resource stewardship.

http://2dnw.org
Current data argue for increased support of sustainable agriculture producers through solid technical training in the areas of competitive retail/Internet sales, packaging, processing, and marketing of products.

Education gaps in these areas were identified and in response the WRDC convened a team of specialists from throughout the region to develop and deliver training on these topics.

Funded by Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) the face-to-face training held in May 2007 and the DVD video released in 2008 were created to provide professional development training to increase the capacity of Extension faculty, USDA agency personnel, and other federal, state, or private agricultural professionals, to work with producers interested in entering retail and Internet markets.

These findings and arguments suggest a gap between the need for information and the availability of training—particularly information and training that would lead to expanded retail and Internet markets.

This project works to close some of the gaps and provide a model that could be adopted in states across the Western Region.

**DVD Training Topics:**

- The Producer Perspective
- Marketing into Local Food Systems and Sustainable Marketing
- A New Venture Creation Process
- eCommerce Overview and Technology
- A Primer on Processing Foods to Add Value
- Farm Bill and Funding Opportunities for New Agriculture Marketing and Enterprises

Despite these challenges, the opportunity for producers to link to small retailers is very real and timely within the current retail market. In order to be prepared to respond to the opportunity, producers and service providers need additional information and training.
Organic
The number one topic about which agricultural producers are requesting information.

Limited supplies of the DVD are still available by contacting the WRDC.
Information obtained from a survey of DVD recipients conducted by the WRDC.

Entrepreneurial Sustainable Agriculture

“WELL DONE AND RELATIVE TO START-UP BUSINESSES NEEDING BASIC DIRECTION. INFORMATIVE.” — DVD RECIPIENT

68%
The percentage of DVD recipients who plan to use the DVD to provide future trainings.

50%
The percentage of DVD recipients who plan to partner with an agricultural producer to provide future trainings.

43
The number of states the DVD has been shipped to by request.
Promoting and Educating

The WRDC allocates a portion of its funding to promote and educate stakeholders about the Center and programs offered through the Center’s partnerships. This is achieved by informing and educating stakeholders about the WRDC’s activities and resources.

Thank you for sending the DVD! I have just gone to your website and I am delighted with what I have found. It is very encouraging to see the work that you are doing.
- DVD Recipient
Exhibits
The WRDC, either alone or in conjunction with the other Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDC) exhibited at the following events between July 2007 and June 2008.

Transatlantic Land Use Conference
24-26 September 2007
Washington D.C.

Diversified Agriculture Conference
20-22 February 2008
Logan, Utah

SARE 20th Anniversary Conference
25-27 March 2008
Kansas City, Missouri

Land Grant Youth Entrepreneurship Symposium
4-6 June 2008
State College, Pennsylvania

Sponsorships
The WRDC contributed financial support to the following professional associations and/or events during the year.

Transatlantic Land Use Conference
24-26 2007 September
Washington D.C.

Utah Bioneers Conference
19-21 October 2007
Logan, Utah

SARE 20th Anniversary Conference and Travelships
25-27 March 2008
Kansas City, Missouri

Land Grant Youth Entrepreneurship Symposium
4-6 June 2008
State College, Pennsylvania

Publications
Entrepreneurial Ag DVD
Rural Connections
Annual Report 2006-07

Connecting throughout the Region and Nation
The map below illustrates the locations of our programs, participants, exhibits, and where we have sent requested materials during the past year.
WRDC Funding

- **CSREES Core**: 73%
- **Revenue**: 13%
- **Non-Federal**: 10%
- **Utah State**: 4%

Total FY 2008 Funds: $635,070
Western Rural Development Center, established by the Rural Development Act of 1972 “to provide for improving the economy and living conditions in rural America,” works closely with the land-grant colleges and universities throughout its region.

1862
American Samoa Community College
College of Micronesia
Colorado State University
Montana State University
New Mexico State University
Northern Marianas College
Oregon State University
University of Alaska
University of Arizona
University of California
University of Guam
University of Hawaii
University of Idaho
University of Nevada
University of Wyoming
Utah State University
Washington State University

1994
Blackfeet Community College, MT
Chief Dull Knife College, MT
Dine College, AZ
Fort Belknap College, MT
Fort Peck Community College, MT
Institute of American Indian Arts, NM
Little Big Horn College, MT
Navajo Technical College, NM
Northwest Indian College, WA
Salish Kootenai College, MT
Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, NM
Stone Child College, MT
Tohono O’Odham Community College, AZ
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Dr. Noelle Cockett, Chair
Vice President, University
Extension & Agriculture
Dean, College of Agriculture
Chair, Western Rural Development Center
Utah State University

Ms. Bettye Atkinson
Chief of Planning and Technical Assistance
Economic Development Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

Dr. James Christenson
Associate Dean and Director, Cooperative Extension
Associate Vice President, Outreach
University of Arizona

Dr. Charles Gay
Associate Vice President and Associate Director, University Extension
Utah State University

Ms. Karen Grillo
Director of Agriculture Marketing and Promotion
Nevada Association of Counties

Mr. Robert Hadfield
Interim Executive Director
Nevada Association of Counties

Dr. Tom Hams
Director, Center for Economic Development
University of Nevada, Reno

WRDC Staff
Don E. Albrecht
Director

James Goodwin
Senior Program Officer

Trish Kingsford
Senior Staff Assistant

Stephanie Malin
Assistant Editor and Researcher

Whitney Mortensen
Office Assistant

Betsy H. Newman
Publication Specialist

Dr. Carol Lewis
Dean, School of Natural Resources and Agriculture Sciences
Director, Agriculture and Forestry Experiment Station
University of Alaska, Fairbanks

Dr. Sally Maggard
Federal Liaison
National Program Leader
CSREES-ECS
USDA

Ms. Kathleen Moxon
Director, Redwood Coast Rural Action
Humboldt Area Foundation

Dr. Rangesan Narayanan
Professor and Associate Dean, College of Agriculture
University of Nevada, Reno

Dr. H. Paul Rasmussen
Director, Utah Agricultural Experiment Station
Utah State University

Dr. Peter Stenberg
Regional Economist
Economic Research Service
USDA

Dr. Yvonneda Thompson
Director, Cooperative Extension
Chief Dull Knife College

Mr. Dave Tovey
Economic Development Director
Siletz Tribal Development Corporation
The WRDC has actively engaged in partnership-building activities with institutions, agencies, NGOs, and the private sector throughout its region. Below is a sampling of partners the Center collaborated with during the year.

Association of Extension Administrators
Association of Research Directors
Center for Rural Affairs
Economic Research Service, USDA
Farm Foundation
Idaho Rural Partnership
National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals
North Central Regional Center for Rural Development
Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development
Northwest Area Foundation
Partners for Prosperity
RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship
Rural Community Assistance Corporation
Rural Sociological Society
Sustainable Agriculture Research Education (SARE)
Sierra Institute of Community and Environment
Southern Rural Development Center
Southwest Marketing Network
USDA Rural Development
Utah Department of Rural Economic Development
Western Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
Western Extension Directors Association

“Our goal at the Western Rural Development Center is to develop collaborative partnerships with land-grant universities and others involved in rural community efforts, so that together we can enhance the well-being of rural people and communities. I appreciate our rural development partners and I am excited to develop opportunities that are beneficial to both our partners and the residents of the rural west.” – Don E. Albrecht, WRDC Director
WRDC
Engaging the Future
http://wrdc.usu.edu