



The vision of the Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI) is that rural people and places have the resources and capacities to create strong, viable, meaningful, and sustainable futures that can both withstand and turn to advantage the forces of globalization and economic, demographic, and social change; and that rural and urban people find common cause and understanding about the future role and governance of rural places and the contribution that rural life and culture makes to national identity.

In support of this vision, RUPRI's mission is to provide unbiased analysis and information on the challenges, needs, and opportunities facing rural America, and spur public dialogue and help policymakers understand the impacts of public policies and programs on rural people and places.

Summary of Accomplishments, 2007

Rural Development

- Provided ongoing information, analysis, and advice to Congressional and Administration staff on the rural development components of the 2007 Farm Bill, with a particular focus on the Rural Collaborative Investment Program (RCIP). Highlights include testimony to the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry Committee hearing on rural development challenges and opportunities (February 2007) and a presentation to the same Committee (October 2007) on *Why Rural Development Investments are Critical to the Future of America's Farm Families: Seven Considerations for Committee Review*.
- Worked closely with USDA Rural Development senior management on two critical projects: the development and implementation of the Socio-Economic Benefit Assessment System – a mechanism designed by RUPRI Community Policy Analysis Center for measuring the outcomes and impact of Federal Rural Development programs, which in October 2007 was awarded the Secretary's Annual Award for Excellence – and the development of a mapping system for assessing the implications of different definitions of “rural” on these programs.
- The Brookings Institution published a RUPRI paper on *Rural-Urban Interdependence: Why Metropolitan and Rural America Need Each Other* as part of its Blueprint for American Prosperity Program.

Rural Health and Human Services

- Successfully competed for and awarded a further five-year cooperative agreement with the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy. This is a joint project between RUPRI and the RUPRI Center for Rural Health Policy Analysis at the University of Nebraska, Omaha, intended to inform policymakers, rural community leaders, rural health care providers and others about key health and human services policy issues. It will focus on health and human services integration, health workforce development, and the role of community colleges as well as

overarching issues arising from upcoming health care reform and their impact on rural areas and community health.

- The RUPRI Rural Health Panel continued to provide decision makers with timely, objective, and expert analysis of the implications of policy for rural health. In 2007, the Panel produced three reports and briefs on rural definitions, strategies for bridging rural health research and policy, and issues arising from Medicare Advantage plans in rural areas.
- The RUPRI Community Information Resources Center developed a means of engaging regional and community human services agencies in identifying, analyzing, and prioritizing issues. “Community Issues Management,” which has been created in collaboration with a number of United Way organizations, provides an integrated way of using multiple datasets within a national Internet-based GIS framework to generate dynamic reports and maps to aid informed decision-making and resource allocation.

Rural Entrepreneurship

- Conducted and submitted the draft final report on the evaluation of the Appalachian Regional Commission’s \$43 million Entrepreneurship Initiative, as well as four publications for the Southern Regional Development Center of case studies of rural businesses using e-commerce, a review for the Kellogg Foundation of their program-related investment in Northern Initiatives, Michigan, and a major program of enterprise-readiness engagement and training in rural counties in Alabama and Mississippi. Continued to provide e2 Institutes – intensive three or four day training programs for communities seeking to stimulate and support entrepreneurship development strategies.
- Continued participation in the Home Town Competitiveness program in Nebraska and the replication of Transfer of Wealth studies pioneered by the Nebraska Community Foundation to 18 states across the country.

Regional Competitiveness

- The newly-created Center for Regional Competitiveness in Kansas City, MO led a process to craft a regional competitiveness strategy for a 37-county region in Mississippi and Alabama, and in so doing refined its regional analytics capabilities for use in other regions across the country. Center Director Mark Drabenstott’s role as Chair of the OECD’s Territorial Development Policy Committee has enabled him to lay the foundations for significant international exchange and cooperation on regional competitiveness which it is anticipated will leverage substantial federal and private sector investment in coming years.

Rural Governance

- Published a report, *Eight Principles for Effective Rural Governance...and How Communities Put Them into Practice*, as the output of a study funded by the Northwest Area Foundation on innovative approaches to improving decision making in rural regions and communities.



National Policy Programs

The RUPRI National Policy Programs portfolio addresses three overarching goals: (1) to continue to support an innovative new public policy framework for US rural development, centered upon asset-based strategies, the fostering of a new rural governance, regional frameworks and innovation / entrepreneurship; (2) to provide public policy counsel, analyses, and decision support assistance for national and international decision makers, and the external constituencies which are impacted through these public policy sectors; and (3) to provide national and international policy decision-support, outreach, and facilitation services to other RUPRI panels, workgroups, initiatives, and conferences.

Major Accomplishments in 2007

Research and Policy Support for the Design and Development of the 2007 Farm Bill

- Provided four testimonies for House and/or Senate Ag Committees.
- Provided ongoing non-partisan counsel to the staff the House and Senate Ag Committees, as well as Committee Members and their personal staff.
- Provided continuous policy outreach services to the public media, national advocacy community, and research communities attempting to understand the rural development implications of this omnibus Title.
- Through a cooperative agreement with USDA Rural Development, provided continuous analyses and research counsel to both Committees and Members regarding anticipated changes in the rural eligibility definitions within the proposed legislation.
- Through a cooperative agreement with USDA Rural Development, provided continuous analyses and research counsel to both Committees and Members regarding the current geographic distribution of USDA Rural Development investments, since the 2002 Farm Bill.
- Provided ongoing counsel and analytic support to Senior Administrators within USDA RD regarding the above two services.
- Assisted in the design, development, and ongoing support for the Campaign for a Renewed Rural Development, a significant new rural development organization, comprised of over 30 of our nation's most important national rural policy organizations.

Rural Policy Counsel / Decision Support

- Provided ongoing policy counsel for multiple federal agencies, state governors and agencies, and regional and local organizations.
- Provided senior counsel and analyses for six major state efforts, designed to craft a more innovative public framework for state level rural development activities.
- Assisted Congressional offices seeking assistance in understanding the rural differential impacts of numerous federal legislative proposals.

- Began discussion with senior principals within our nation’s major ag and commodity organizations, designed to enhance their interest in, and support of, major new rural policy initiatives, following passage of the 2007 Farm Bill.

Comparative Rural Policy

- Worked in collaboration with the German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Midwestern Governors Association to design and implement an international rural development study tour, comprised of Midwestern governors and senior cabinet members, centered upon European rural policy approaches.
- In collaboration with the German Marshall Fund, designed and facilitated an EU rural policy study tour for USDA RD Undersecretary Tom Dorr and a senior delegation of RD principals.
- Supported a US/EU rural development conference, held in Wye, UK, sponsored by the Economic Research Service/USDA.
- Designed and facilitated a ministerial exchange between Deputy Director-General Loretta Dormal-Marino, DG-AGRI and USDA Rural Development Undersecretary Tom Dorr, focused upon the creation of an ongoing EU-US comparative rural policy program.

National Perspectives on State Level Rural Policy Design

- Continued work with the Administration of Governor Mitch Daniels of Indiana, implementing the Rural Indiana Strategy for Excellence (RISE 2020).
- Initiated discussions and planning with the Administration of Ohio Governor Ted Stickland, to implement a similar program there, centered in the Ohio Department of Agriculture.

Goals and Strategic Directions for 2008

Research and Policy Support Regarding Implementation of the 2007 Farm Bill

- Continue to work with senior leadership in USDA RD to assist in implementation of significant new programs currently contained in the Senate and House drafts of the 2007 Farm Bill.
- Through the ongoing USDA cooperative agreement, expand analytic and mapping support services for USDA RD programs, assisting senior staff in building stronger “field-based” decision support services.
- Assist the Senate and House Ag Committees in the mandated study of rural definitions and rural eligibility, contained within the House Farm Bill proposal.

Rural Policy Counsel / Decision Support

- Continue support for the gubernatorial initiatives underway in Indiana and Ohio (see above).
- Assist New York decision makers in building a rural governance intermediary to enhance asset-based development in the St. Lawrence River region of that state.
- Respond to requests from the policy committees of the Republican and Democratic Presidential campaigns concerning a new rural development framework for our nation.
- Assist the Transition Team of the successful Presidential candidate in building a rural policy framework within their domestic policy design.
- Expand the breadth and depth of policy concern articulated by the National Campaign for a Renewed Rural Development, with a particular focus on the bio-economy, regional food systems, sustainable landscape, and the new CDBG formula.

Comparative Rural Policy

- Design and facilitate ongoing dialogue between Deputy Director-General Loretta Dormal-Marino, DG-AGRI, and her senior staff and USDA Undersecretary for Rural Development Tom Dorr and his senior colleagues.
- Facilitate a July EU study tour hosted by Undersecretary Dorr and Deputy Director-General Loretta Dormal-Marino, to be held in Europe the third week in July. The US delegation will be comprised of state Farm Bureau and Farmers Union presidents, the presidents of their national organizations, and senior leadership from USDA.

Bridging the Chasm between Agriculture and Rural Development Policy and the Constituencies that Support Each.

- In collaboration with the American Farm Bureau Federation, design a two-day retreat for 10 of the most influential Farm Bureau Presidents, regarding a new rural development approach for our nation. This is designed to assist AFBF in building a work-plan for their new AFBF rural policy team.
- Design and host an invitation only national rural policy retreat, to be held in July, designed to initiate a dialogue regarding the transition dynamics which might move commodity payments to rural development investments, in the next omnibus Farm Bill, to be re-authorized in five years.
- Assist state Farm Bureau, Farmers Union and State USDA RD Directors in facilitating similar dialogues within their states.



Community Information Resource Center (CIRC)

RUPRI's Community Information Resource Center provides timely, policy-relevant information and decision support to government agencies, non-profit organizations, and citizen groups across the U.S. and globally. CIRC works with stakeholders to link people and place through

interactive visualization, analytical tools, and spatial analysis. Our mission is to make public information publicly accessible in a decision support framework.

Major Accomplishments in 2007

- 2007: Rural Early Childhood Mapping Initiative – Phase V (Source: Early Childhood Institute).
<http://earlychildhood.msstate.edu/>
 - Completed the Mississippi Reading Score Analysis project to locate school districts with low third-grade reading proficiency scores and low 5-year improvement rates. Compared these districts to locations of child care facilities and areas of rurality and poverty for a report prepared by the Early Childhood Institute.
 - Completed the Early Childhood Disaster Risk Index. The index is a chartbook that identifies risk factors for early childhood services and scores counties by the disaster preparedness of their early childhood sectors.
<http://www.earlychildhood.msstate.edu/disaster-risk/>
The index is a tool for state and federal child care emergency management agencies and for nongovernmental organizations concerned with disaster response. This tool was highlighted in the Journal of Emergency Management (July-August).
 - Disaster response effort continues. CIRC supported Save the Children's domestic team in responding to the following disasters: February tornadoes in Florida; February tornadoes in Arkansas; October wildfires in California. In addition, data was collected throughout the year to ensure the Atlas is "ready" to respond to disasters in the 15 pilot states.
 - Maps and tables were produced for the report entitled "Indicators of Access to Early Childhood Services in the Mississippi Delta".
http://www.earlychildhood.msstate.edu/news/6-1-07_delta-forum.htm
- GIS Infrastructure Development and Technical Support for Health and Human Services Activities for the Rural Assistance Center (Source: University of North Dakota – Rural Assistance Center (subcontract through RUPRI to CIRC)). <http://www.raconline.org/maps/>
 - Updates were made to the data and maps on the RAC website several times throughout the year as data were released.
- Federal Funds Database Project (in cooperation with the Southern Rural Development Initiative) <http://circ.rupri.org/srdi/>
 - The federal funds database was integrated in the CIRC system
 - A web-based form was created to query the federal funds database and return tabular results
 - A dynamic mapping component was added to the federal funds application

- Community Issues Management
<http://www.cim-network.org>
 - Integrated data and created unique data portals for the following partners: Trident United Way, United Way of Detroit and Southeastern Michigan; United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona; United Way of America; Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania region
 - The first annual CIM convening was held in August of 2007 in Tucson, Arizona
- RUPRI Core Support
 - Mapping/Analysis to support the RUPRI work with the House and Senate Agriculture Committees regarding definitions of rural
 - Mapping/Analysis in collaboration with USDA to map the investments in USDA RD programs and current and proposed eligibility criteria for those programs.
 - Mapping/Analysis supporting RUPRI Health, Poverty, Entrepreneurship and Human Services Initiatives
 - Map series completed for the *AgriPulse* publication - farm program payments and population change in several states.
 - USDA Rural Development data integration in to CIRC map room
 - Continued data integration and updates to the CIRC map room throughout the year

Goals and Strategic Directions for 2008

CIRC Strategic Direction for 2008:

- Examine and realign institutional linkages between CIRC, CARES and RUPRI.
- Work closely with the RUPRI leadership to maximize our collective expertise to advance RUPRI's unique contributions to rural policy and practice.

CIRC goals:

- Acquire the funding necessary to maintain CIRC through grant activities that are aligned with our mission.
- Expand CIRC's national GIS engine to include natural resources and environmental data.
- Explore integration of the Community Issues Management Initiative into RUPRI activities.
- Expand the relationship between CIRC, RUPRI and USDA-RD.

Continue to work on the following projects:

- 2007: Rural Early Childhood Mapping Initiative – Phase V (Source: Early Childhood Institute).
- GIS Infrastructure Development and Technical Support for Health and Human Services Activities for the Rural Assistance Center (Source: University of North Dakota – Rural Assistance Center (subcontract through RUPRI to CIRC)).
- RUPRI Core Support.



*RUPRI has been partnering with rural community colleges for over three years and in 2007 began a formal relationship with the **Rural Community College Alliance (RCCA)**. RCCA is a network and advocacy group that builds the capacity of member colleges to improve the*

educational and economic prospects for rural America by reducing rural isolation and sharing effective solutions to problems facing distressed rural communities. Membership is over 150 rural and rural-serving institutions. RUPRI has provided leadership for RCCA for the past year.

Major Accomplishments in 2007

- In January of 2007, RCCA became an affiliate council of the American Association of Community Colleges and through that linkage has a presence in Washington DC to inform members, as well as consult with policymakers, on workforce issues that impact public policy discussions. RCCA has focused on two workforce sectors – *health and human services; and renewable energy*.
- RCCA has had several opportunities over the past year to consult with member colleges and inform Congress and the Administration on rural health and human service workforce issues.
 - At the RCCA Annual Conference in Albuquerque, NM in September, RUPRI presented at two pre-conference sessions on using the Community Information Resource Center tools to inform local policy makers and potential funders on the local and regional workforce challenges that colleges face. An entire track of the conference was dedicated to healthcare workforce issues, and health workforce issues were addressed on a mobile tour to a Native American community.
- A seed grant from the CHS foundation, with matching funds from RCCA and ACCC, was received to develop a cross border energy workforce proposal. Marcie McLaughlin, the Interim Director of RCCA and RUPRI's Director of Constituent Relations, participated in a study tour in Germany, focusing on German and EU energy workforce training and challenges.

Goals and Strategic Directions for 2008

- Continue to strengthen the relationship between RCCA, the American Association of Community Colleges, and the Association of Canadian Community Colleges.
 - RCCA will participate in the AACC Annual Convention in April, 2008 in Philadelphia, PA. RCCA will host a round table and a reception, and several RCCA members will have workshops at the Convention.
 - The ACCC will hold their annual conference in May 2008.
- Upcoming meetings/opportunities regarding workforce issues
 - January 2008 meeting of 12 rural community college Presidents with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Adult and Vocational Education.
 - Multi-agency meeting, including Departments of Labor, Economic Development, USDA Rural Development, and Health and Human Services to hear from rural community college Presidents on workforce issues, particularly healthcare workforce.
 - RCCA will present to the Secretary's Council on Health and Human Resources about in February 2008 regarding the role of community colleges in health and human services workforce training.
 - In March of 2008, rural community college Presidents will meet with members of the RUPRI Rural Health Panel and an invited group of health workforce experts to explore potential collaborations.
- Upcoming meetings/opportunities regarding renewable energy issues
 - RCCA will be represented at the Washington International Renewable Energy Conference (WIREC) in March 2008.
 - Participate in the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Workforce Conference to be held in March at Hudson Valley New York Community College.



Center for Regional Competitiveness

The RUPRI Center for Regional Competitiveness marked its first year of operations in 2007. The Center was founded at the University of Missouri in 2006 to be the nation's leader in regional competitiveness and regional development policy.

The Center aims to provide the public decision tools and governance mechanisms regions need to compete in the global economic race. The Center made great progress in developing these tool kits in 2007 through a major research project conducted for the U.S. Department of Labor. The Center was also actively involved in global discussions on regional development policy and the links between universities and regional development. In the coming year, the Center will focus on further refining competitiveness tools, launching a major initiative in the Kansas City region, and starting a new research program on regional innovation systems.

Major Accomplishments in 2007

- Developed a comprehensive regional development strategy for the western Alabama/eastern Mississippi region under the U.S. Department of Labor's WIRED program. This task included mapping principal economic assets, identifying the region's economic potential, and presenting a menu of the best development options to governors and regional leaders.
- Assembled a team of eminent regional economists to develop tools for diagnosing a region's competitive advantage, tools that were tested in the AL/MS region.
- Provided leadership for the OECD's *Territorial Development Policy Committee*, the premier global forum on regional development policy. The Center Director serves as chairman of the committee.
- Participated in leading regional policy forums. The Center director provided more than 25 presentations to conferences and symposia in the United States and around the world.

Outcomes and Outputs in 2007

- Research reports
 - *A development strategy for the western Alabama/eastern Mississippi region*, Western Alabama/Eastern Mississippi WIRED project.
 - *Overhauling federal economic development policy*, Economic Development Quarterly, forthcoming.
 - *Universities, regions, and economic development: A view from the United States*, Higher Education Management Journal, forthcoming.
- Center technical advisory team.
 - Created an expert team of four eminent regional economists to develop tools to diagnose a region's competitive advantage (Profs. Ed Feser, Geoff Hewings, and Andy Isserman, all University of Illinois, and Prof. Mark Partridge, The Ohio State University).

- International dialogue on regional policy
 - Canadian rural working group on community collaboration and development (March & November).
 - Italian symposium on regional development and public investment (Rome, June).
 - International comparative rural studies symposium (Spain, July).
 - International conference on China's national innovation strategy and regional development (Beijing, August)
 - International conference on universities and regional development (Spain, September).

Goals and Strategic Directions for 2008

- *Launch the second round of regional projects to refine analytical tools that diagnose regional competitive advantage and to identify structures that sustain regional decisionmaking.*
 - Begin work in 2 new regions (southern Minnesota & Riverlands (IA, IL, & WI) to develop further and test regional analytics.
 - Working with our technical advisors, begin to establish new academic forums to discuss regional analytics and engage other researchers.
 - Convene an OECD research forum on diagnosing regional competitiveness (late 2008).
 - Compile articles for a special edition of an academic journal on diagnosing regional competitiveness (early 2009).
 - Convene a special session at the North American Regional Science Association on regional analytics and competitiveness (fall 2009).
- *Begin a major initiative in the Kansas City region to help it develop a comprehensive region-wide development strategy.*
 - Work with regional partners to bring the OECD to the region to conduct one of its first metropolitan reviews in the United States.
- *Begin a major research program on regional innovation systems.*
 - Working with the OECD, identify a taxonomy of emerging regional innovation systems and begin case studies of leading U.S. regions.
- *Complete a research project to help regions prioritize investments in public goods.*
 - Working in conjunction with Purdue University and other partners, develop and test a new tool that helps regional leaders compare and prioritize key investments in public goods.
- *Launch a new global roundtable on universities and regional development.*
 - In partnership with the OECD and the University of Missouri, convene the first meeting of this roundtable of universities presidents, government officials, and experts.

Founded in 2001, the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship enters its 7th year of operation with a new strategic imperative. Our expanding research and practice portfolios, new partnerships, and deeper engagement in some rural landscapes is met by the need to build a stronger, more sustainable financial and organizational base for the Center. The accomplishments of the past year are many; the need for deeper and more strategic assistance throughout rural America continues to grow.



Major Accomplishments in 2007

- Expanded research activity – Center staff undertook major new research efforts to evaluate past and ongoing entrepreneurship development initiatives and continued to build a library of case studies of excellent practice.
- Extended outreach through publications about lessons learned and excellent practice – The Center electronic newsletter, research reports, case studies, and E Stories have been extended to new audiences and continue to be a primary means of sharing information about rural entrepreneurship with practitioners and policy makers.
- Expanded outreach through regional and national trainings for entrepreneurship practitioners and community/state leaders – 2007 marked the first full year of regional Energizing Entrepreneurship trainings, representing a new model for delivering a framework for entrepreneurship development to community leaders.
- Extended Transfer of Wealth analysis – The Center’s Nebraska office continues to build reputation and excellence in helping states understand projected wealth transfer and consider strategies for capturing a portion of that transfer in support of economic development.

Outcomes and Outputs in 2007

- Research Reports and Case Study Publications
 - Evaluation of the Appalachian Regional Commission’s Entrepreneurship Initiative, 1997-2005
 - Evaluation of Northern Initiatives PRI from Kellogg Foundation
 - Case Studies of Rural E-Commerce Businesses
 - Eight Principles of Effective Rural Governance...and How Communities Put Them Into Practice
- Energizing Entrepreneurship Institutes – 6 regional and 1 national
- Policy Academy – southwestern Minnesota
- Strategic consulting

- Western Alabama-Eastern Mississippi WIRED region
- Southwestern North Dakota
- Kansas Farm Bureau
- Heartland e² in the Northern Great Plains
- Expansion of HomeTown Competitiveness Initiative
 - Creation of Economic/Entrepreneurial Indicators
 - Expanded Community Engagement Strategy and Tools
 - Development of Research Library
 - Implementation of Entrepreneur Attraction Strategy
 - Creation of Youth Entrepreneurship Academy and Guide
- Transfer of Wealth (TOW) Analysis
 - Completed in 2007 – Studies in IL, OH, MI and NY
 - Started in 2007 – Studies in PA and NV
 - New TOW Book Developed via HTC Work

Goals and Strategic Directions for 2008

Continue to be the “go to” resource for entrepreneurship practitioners in rural America

- *Strategy* – Develop “next generation” training for entrepreneurship practitioners
- *Strategy* – Develop resource guide of effective practices
- *Strategy* – Further develop comprehensive youth engagement approach including focused training and resource materials
- *Strategy* – Develop partnerships to expand capacity to serve practitioners, e.g., Kansas Farm Bureau, Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education

Continue to build the Center’s research capacity and reach

- *Strategy* – Develop a research guidebook for evaluating the outcomes of entrepreneurship investments
- *Strategy* – Expand case study library with excellent practices
- *Strategy* – Respond to RFPs for evaluation research
- *Strategy* – Develop partnerships to expand research capacity, e.g., CFED, EntreWorks Consulting

Redefine organizational structure for the Center that ensures sustainability, enables flexibility and responsiveness to new opportunities in the field, and acts as a framework for future activity

- *Strategy* – Craft a development plan for the Center
- *Strategy* – Rebuild core funding for the Center
- *Strategy* – Design an organizational structure for the Center that reflects mission and capacities



This report reflects the combined efforts of the RUPRI Center for Rural Health Policy Analysis and the RUPRI Health Panel. The projects reflected in the report were funded by sources other than RUPRI:

- *Cooperative Agreement with the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (ORHP) that supports the research center: \$500,000 per annum*
- *Cooperative Agreement with ORHP that supports Panel activities (sub contractor to U of Missouri)*
- *Cooperative Agreement with ORHP that supports Panel activities associated with the Rural Assistance Center (helps support one Panel meeting and some phone calls)*
- *Contract with the Wyoming Healthcare Commission*
- *Contract with the Wyoming Office of Rural Health*
- *The College of Public Health, UNMC (in kind and direct for one Panel meeting)*

Major Accomplishments in 2007

- The RUPRI Center for Rural Health Policy Analysis completed and published a comprehensive report of the current state for rural health care delivery in Wyoming, with recommendations for improvement. The report was based on extensive data analysis, including use of hospital data to assess out-migration, economic data to measure the impact of health care providers to economic development, and two site visits.
- The RUPRI Center also completed eight policy briefs and one policy paper, available on the center web site (www.unmc.edu/ruprihealth).
- The Center continued efforts to launch the Sentinel Communities project, but negotiations with a community in Colorado did not produce the first site. However, several documents were prepared for the purpose of marketing this project.
- Center scholars shared findings and provided consultation to congressional staff, in particular to the state of the Senate Committee on Finance, set up by RUPRI Government Affairs staff.
- The RUPRI Rural Health Panel completed three documents.
- The Panel provided consultative services to the US Department of Agriculture, staff to the Senate Committee on Finance, staff to the US Department of Health and Human Services and state offices of rural health.

Goals and Strategic Directions for 2008

For the RUPRI Center for Rural Health Policy Analysis

- Submission of the next competitive application to ORHP, due April 14, 2008
- Engage scholars and community college representatives in a discussion of needs for the rural health care workforce
- Complete projects from the current cooperative agreement with ORHP
 - Assessing the Community Impact of the MMA
 - Examining the Applicability of AHRQ's Inpatient Quality Indicators to Rural Hospitals and the Implications of the Relationship Between the Indicators and Financial Measures for Medicare Payment Policies
 - Medicare Modernization Act: Reality for Rural Beneficiaries and Providers (w/ NC)
 - Rural Provider Participation in a Statewide Health Information Project
 - Examining the Time-Trend and Variation of ACSC-Related Hospital Expenditure of Rural Americans with Different Health Insurance Coverage and Status
 - Expanding Rural Health Insurance Coverage: How Do Insurance Reform Strategies Stack Up? (with Maine)
 - Impact of Medicare Advantage Plan Concentration on Choices and Competition in Rural Areas
- Complete new projects for the Wyoming Health Care Commission – a blueprint for a new commission and a pilot study of integrating health care in a rural Wyoming county
- Complete a rural health plan with the Wyoming Office of Rural Health
- Launch the Sentinel Communities project and integrate it with international efforts (including chairing a panel at the April OECD Conference)
- Continue staff support to the Rural Hospitals Issues Group
- Submit at least one other proposal for extramural funding

For the Rural Health Panel

- Engage in the growing discussion of system reform of health care delivery and finance in the U.S., including disseminating a document suggesting a criteria for analyzing proposals from a rural perspective (funded by ORHP)
- Secure additional funding to support Panel initiative to influence the content of reform proposals
- Continue to work with the USDA to increase the presence of health care infrastructure in rural development
- Continue to be responsive to special requests for our advice, including an assessment of the CMS proposal for value based purchasing

The goal of the State Policy Programs Initiative is to encourage and enable state policymakers to develop and implement conscious and informed state rural policies, and create a cadre of state rural champions in support of national policy.



Program Highlights - 2007

- *Agriculture Chairs Summit.* Participated as staff and program planner to Summit in Washington DC, bringing together over 100 rural state legislators for two days of educational programs on agriculture and rural development issues
- *USDA Rural Development Tour.* Participated in second annual tour highlighting Rural Development projects in rural areas of Tennessee, Mississippi and Arkansas.
- *Rural Philanthropy conference.* Led delegation of local Texas leaders to conference on rural philanthropy and community foundations hosted by the Nebraska Community Foundation
- *Mapping Workshop.* Organized and hosted one-day workshop by RUPRI's Community Information Resource Center (CIRC) to train organization staff and leaders. Attended by approximately 20 persons representing 8 organizations and agencies.
- *Rural Policy Presentation.* Made presentation to Texas Office of Rural Community Affairs on similar offices in other states and how they contribute to rural policy and programming in their jurisdictions.
- *National Association of Development Organizations.* Represented RUPRI at NADO national conference.
- *Texas Rural Innovators Forum.* Hosted significant speakers' program for Texas Rural Innovators consisting of seven Forums throughout the year; maintained beneficial contacts with rural leaders and organizations throughout the nation on behalf of Texas Rural Innovators and RUPRI
- Maintained beneficial contacts partner organizations, including the following:
 - Annie E. Casey Foundation
 - Aspen Institute
 - Heartland Center for Leadership Development
 - One Economy Corporation
 - Nebraska Community Foundation
 - Southern Good Faith Fund
 - Southern Bancorps
 - Sirolli Institute

- Numerous rural state legislators
- State rural policy centers in NC, VA, MD, PA, VT, IN, IL, MN, OR, TX, including new contacts with rural centers in Arizona and Nebraska and on-going consultation with new rural center in Alabama

Goals and Strategic Directions - 2008

The principal successes of the state policy program have been in dissemination and outreach with two groups of state policy makers: rural legislators and directors of state rural policy centers.

It is important to continue exposing rural legislators to innovative and effective state programs, as they have the pen and the purse that can put policy in motion. However, legislators tend to be reactive and they are not good at taking abstract concepts (e.g., “regional development”, “asset-based planning”) and translating them into viable programs.

State rural policy centers are the sites of the state-specific research, strategic thinking and program development that best under-gird legislative or other state government action. A capable state policy center working with a receptive legislature (or executive) is a powerful combination and should be our goal for every possible state.

Our State Policy Programs goals and strategic direction for 2008 are, accordingly:

- Continue work to strengthen and expand the coalition of state rural policy centers, and to extend the concept to other states and entities
- Maintain beneficial contact with state legislators and continue exposing them to innovative rural ideas and programs through the Agriculture Chairs Summit, the national and regional legislative associations and other educational programming
- Develop a rigorous overview of state rural policy centers that encapsulates our knowledge of the beginnings, purposes, achievements and dynamics of these organizations



Poverty and Human Services Initiatives

The RUPRI Rural Poverty Research Center was founded in 2002 with a three-year grant from the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) in the Department of Health and Human Services. Although funding was not renewed in 2005, the Center has continued to operate its website, newsletter, and working paper series. In 2007, RUPRI began a cooperative agreement with the Office of Rural Health Policy, which will provide resources for several initiatives in human services.

Major Accomplishments in 2007

- RUPRI successfully competed for and was awarded a five-year cooperative agreement with the Office of Rural Health Policy. This joint project between RUPRI and the RUPRI Center for Rural Health Policy Analysis at the University of Nebraska Medical Center is intended to inform policymakers, rural community leaders, rural health care providers and others about key health and human services policy issues. The work focuses on health and human services integration, health workforce development.
- RUPRI began working on the formulation of a rural human services panel, and secured support from Jerry Friedman, Executive Director of the American Public Human Services Association, to play a key role in this initiative.
- RUPRI's Community Information Resource Center developed a means of engaging regional and community human services agencies in identifying, analyzing, and prioritizing issues. The tool, *Community Issues Management*, provides an integrated way of using multiple datasets within a national internet-based GIS framework to generate dynamic reports and maps to aid informed decision-making and resource allocation.

Outcomes and Outputs in 2007

- The Rural Poverty Research Center continued to publish its newsletter, *Perspectives on Poverty, Policy and Place*, with three issues in 2007.
- Two working papers were published by the Rural Poverty Research Center in 2007:
 - "Participation and Employment Dynamics of Child Care Subsidy Users in Rural and Urban Oregon," by Elizabeth E. Davis, Deana Grobe, and Roberta B. Weber.
 - "Assessing Community Capacity in Rural America: Some Lessons from Two Rural Observatories," by Alex Marre and Bruce Weber.

Goals and Strategic Directions for 2008

- RUPRI will continue to build the human services panel, and will host an inaugural meeting of the panel in July or August of 2008.

- Through work on the cooperative agreement with the Office of Rural Health Policy, RUPRI will bring together experts in health workforce issues and community college presidents for a one-day discussion to explore potential collaborations.
- The Community Information Resource Center will continue development of the *Community Issues Management* tool and seek opportunities to integrate this tool with other RUPRI initiatives.