

## Rural Futures Lab

The RUPRI Rural Futures Lab is a new initiative from the Rural Policy Research Institute. We are seeking to create a forward-looking narrative about rural America that recognizes the vital contribution that rural people and places make to national well-being and prosperity.

The Lab’s activities focus on promising answers to the question, ‘What can we do today to achieve positive rural outcomes tomorrow? Rural America plays a vital role in and can benefit from equitable collaboration and innovation in several key economic drivers that affect the entire nation. These include **regional and local food systems, alternative energy, ecosystems services, and adaptation to climate change**. There are also fundamental structural investments that will shape the ability of rural people and places to fully engage in these drivers, principally, **health systems, education, broadband, and transportation**. To encourage lasting wealth creation in rural America, we are particularly interested in looking at the drivers and investments through the lenses of **regional collaboration, social equity, innovation and entrepreneurship, and the next generation of rural leaders**.

	ECONOMIC DRIVERS				
LENSES	Local & Regional Food Systems	Alternative Energy	Ecosystems Services	Climate Change Adaptation	INFRASTRUCTURE
Regional Collaboration	<b>RURAL FUTURES LAB</b>				Health Systems
Social Equity					Education
Entrepreneurship					Broadband
Next Generation					Transportation
	Research	Demonstration	Investment	Communication	
	INTERVENTIONS				

We intend that the Rural Futures Lab will become a hub of research and analysis, demonstration, investment, and communication on ways in which rural America can realize its full potential to be both partner and counterpoint to metropolitan America. We will reach out to rural people and institutions that are already working at the cutting edge to uplift promising ideas and practices, and to form partnerships and alliances to link research, policy, and practice in new and creative ways.

The Lab builds upon RUPRI’s 20 years of providing unbiased analysis and information on the challenges, needs and opportunities facing rural America, and of spurring public dialogue that helps policymakers understand the impacts of public policies and programs on rural people and places. In particular, the

Lab will draw upon and contribute to RUPRI's ongoing work in rural health and human services, entrepreneurship, regional innovation, and rural policy and analytics. Our early focus is the preparation of a series of discussion papers and case studies that will provide the foundations for the Lab's workplan over the next several years. The process will be to prepare synthesis papers that will be distributed to a limited number of reviewers to answer the questions:

- What have we missed or misrepresented?
- Where might there be additional data or resources that would strengthen the analyses?
- Where are there promising examples of innovation across the country?
- What are the likely scenarios over the next 10-20 years?

In preparation or planned are:

**Foundation Papers on Economic Drivers**

- Local and Regional Food Systems – *for limited review, October 2010*
- Alternative Energy – *Spring 2011*

**Foundation Papers on Structural Investments**

- Regional Health Systems – *Spring 2011 – in collaboration with RUPRI Rural Health Panel*
- Rural Transportation – *Spring 2011*

**Foundation Papers on Cross-Cutting Themes**

- Regional Collaboration – *for limited review, October 2010*
- Rural Entrepreneurship – *March 2011 – in collaboration with RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship*
- Social Equity – Disability – *Spring 2011 – in collaboration with the University of Montana Rural Institute*
- Voices of the Next Generation – *Spring 2011*

**Case Studies**

- Ogallala Commons – *September 2010*
- Northern Forests Center – *Spring 2011*

These papers (and others) will be combined into a publication on Rural Futures in the summer of 2011.

For further information, please contact:

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