

19th Annual Conference

Rural Community Economic Development:
Finding Innovative Solutions

Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs-Western Illinois University
in conjunction with

Governor's Rural Affairs Council

Chaired by Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn
and

Rural Partners®
present

Never before have rural leaders found themselves in a more complex and rapidly changing environment. Competition for business, residents, and investment come, not just from neighboring towns, but from across the globe. Innovative solutions are required to ensure continued prosperity for all Illinois citizens, especially those living in rural areas. The 19th Annual Rural Community Economic Development Conference will bring together experts from across the country who will share their ideas and successful practices. Please join us in Peoria for *Finding Innovative Solutions*.

Holiday Inn City Centre
Peoria, Illinois

March 5 and 6, 2008



19th Annual Conference

Rural Community Economic Development:
Finding Innovative Solutions

For many years, rural areas nationwide have lagged behind their metro counterparts in economic growth and prosperity. In recent years, however, many rural policymakers have taken stock of the assets in rural areas and have marketed them effectively to help rebuild local economies. New and novel approaches are being tried; resources are being redirected; and businesses are investing in local economic development.

Entrepreneurial approaches have become the mainstay of rural community and economic development. Policymakers are reevaluating some initiatives that no longer seem to work as in the past. Instead, they are working more intensively to identify entrepreneurs and help build their capacity. A new paradigm is unfolding and development practitioners are looking to new types of industries especially suited to rural economies. Ethanol, biodiesel, and biotech are just several examples of approaches that seem to have worked well. Local culture, the arts, and ecosystems also have served as the basis for economic expansion.

The 19th Annual Rural Community Economic Development Conference sponsored by the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, the Governor's Rural Affairs Council, and Rural Partners explores many cutting edge local economic development approaches. Nationally recognized speakers and practitioners will offer many insights and possible strategies that could succeed in your communities. It is an opportunity to hear how and why new strategies have worked in other areas. We look forward to seeing you in Peoria on March 5-6.

Christopher D. Merrett
Director, Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs

Rural Community Economic Development:

Finding Innovative Solutions

Tuesday, March 4, 2008

1:15-4:30 p.m. Optional Pre-Conference Workshop
(See enclosed brochure for registration information)

“Community Housing Needs Assessments: What Are They and Why Should My Community Do One?”

Cynthia B. Struthers and Ruth Thompson, IIRA

Shannon Ruh, Hoopston, Illinois

Scott Thompson, Rushville, Illinois

7:00- 9:00 p.m.

Reception (Cash Bar) and Conference Preregistration

Wednesday, March 5, 2008

8:00- 9:00 a.m. Registration

9:00- 10:15 a.m. Rural Illinois in the Future

Moderator: Norman Walzer, Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs

“Rural Illinois: Where Do We Go From Here?”

Hon. Pat Quinn, Lieutenant Governor, State of Illinois

Chair, Governor’s Rural Affairs Council

“Creative Communities Program in Vermont”

Helen Labun Jordan, Vermont Council on Rural Development

“Innovation Based Revitalization Efforts”

Scott Hutcheson, Purdue University Extension

10:15- 10:30 a.m. Break

10:30- 11:50 a.m. Rural Illinois in the Future (continued)

Moderator: Christopher Merrett, Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs

“Economic Development/Work Force Issues: Tax Policy Changes”

Ralph Martire, Center for Tax and Budget Accountability

“Small Businesses in the 2000s: What You Need to Know”

Patrick Rea, Regional Director SBA, Chicago

11:50- 12:45 p.m. Lunch and Networking

12:50- 1:30 p.m. Annual Meeting of Rural Partners

Moderator: Steven Kline, Chairman, Rural Partners

Conference Highlights

The 19th Annual Rural Community Development Conference will feature an optional pre-conference workshop, *Community Housing Needs Assessments: What Are They and Why Should My Community Do One?*, on Tuesday, March 4 from 1:15 to 4:30 p.m. This workshop requires a separate registration.

Beginning on Wednesday, sessions will highlight successful practices from across the U.S. The conference will include sessions on Vermont's *Creative Communities* initiative, workforce issues, and *Small Businesses in the 2000s*. Innovative economic development strategies will also be discussed, including successful efforts at Purdue University Extension and the University of Missouri's *Regional Cuisines Project*.

Traditional industrial attraction models of economic development are not the only strategy for stimulating local economies. Several sessions will address innovative initiatives that involve entrepreneurship. Deborah Markley from the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship will talk about *Expanding Local Entrepreneurship Efforts*. Ken Anderson from Marshalltown, Iowa, will talk about the importance of Hispanic residents and how they can be part of a local entrepreneurship effort. *Entrepreneurship and a Vibrant Downtown* will feature the success that Lebanon, Illinois, has had in revitalizing its downtown by embracing its small local businesses.

Financing small business start-ups and entrepreneurs in rural areas is always challenging and Joann Schinstock from the Mount Pleasant, Iowa, will discuss how her community is using a community foundation to support local entrepreneurs.

Sessions will also be presented on the *Resident Owned Housing and Tax Increment Financing and Schools: Coexisting for Community Growth*. A session discussing broadband wireless communication systems and the role of librarians in economic development will also be featured.

Conference participants may also attend a session on new and updated funding approaches by major development agencies. This session will allow time for discussions of projects and information sharing with several state and federal agencies.

**1:40- 2:20 p.m. Successful Community Development
2:30- 3:10 p.m. Strategies**

(6 concurrent sessions, repeated so that participants can attend two sessions)

“Innovation-Led Local Economic Development Practices”
Scott Hutcheson, Purdue University Extension

“Enhancing and Retaining Your Work Force”
Ralph Martire, Center for Tax and Budget Accountability

“Incorporating Hispanics into Local Entrepreneurship”
Ken Anderson, Chamber of Commerce, Marshalltown, IA

“Integrating Youth and Adult Entrepreneurship Programs: eSEAL”
Todd Abrahamson, Sigourney-Keota School District, IA

“Building Creative Communities: Practical Examples”
Alex Aldrich, Vermont Arts Council
Helen Labun Jordan, Vermont Council for Rural Development

“Business Planning for Disasters”
Patrick Rea, Small Business Administration

3:10- 3:30 p.m. Networking Break

3:30- 4:10 p.m. Innovative Practices in Communities

4:20- 5:00 p.m.

(6 concurrent sessions, repeated so that participants can attend two sessions)

“Entrepreneurship and a Vibrant Downtown: Lebanon”
Brian G. Dulski, Chamber of Commerce, Lebanon, IL

“Broadband Wireless Communications Systems for Rural America”
Kenneth J. Schlager, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional
Planning Commission

“Tax Increment Financing and Schools: Coexisting for
Community Growth”
Steven Kline, Economic Development Group
Charles Langley, Family Friendly Community Development
Corporation, Dallas City, IL

“Community Foundations Supporting Entrepreneurship”
Joann Schinstock, Mount Pleasant Chamber Alliance

“LOCATION and Economic Development: A New Tool”
Brock Terry, Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs

“Leveraging Rural Development through Regional Cuisines”
Elizabeth Barham, University of Missouri (Columbia)

5:30- 7:00 p.m. Light Dinner and Networking (Cash Bar)

Thursday, March 6, 2008

7:30- 8:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast

8:30- 10:00 a.m. Workshops on Community and

10:30- 12:00 noon Economic Development

(5 concurrent sessions, repeated so that participants can attend two sessions)

“Expanding Local Entrepreneurship Efforts”

Deborah Markley, Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, RUPRI

“Update on Economic Development Program Funding”

Robin Hanna, RETAC and Panel of Funding Agencies

“Strategies for Growing Small Businesses in Rural Areas”

Richard Judd, University of Illinois, Springfield

“Resident Owned Communities: New Directions for Housing”

Paul Bradley, New Hampshire Community Loan Fund

Terry Nelson, Illinois Homeowner Association

“Shall We Dance? The Librarian and the Economic Development Professional”

Maxine Bleiweis, Westport Public Library, Connecticut

10:00-10:30 a.m. Networking Break

12:00 Noon Conference Adjourns

Registration

Registrations postmarked by February 18, 2008, will be at the Early Bird rate of \$150.00 per person. Registrations postmarked after that date and at the door will be \$160.00. The registration fee includes lunch and a "light dinner" on Wednesday, March 5, a continental breakfast on Thursday, March 6, and breaks on both days. **The registration deadline is Wednesday, February 27, 2008.** To register, return your completed registration form and payment to:

Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs Fax: (309) 298-2142
Stipes Hall 518
Western Illinois University
1 University Circle
Macomb, IL 61455-1390

Checks, money orders, vouchers, or purchase orders should be made payable to the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs. WIU/FEIN number: 37-0910458. **Online credit card registration will be available at www.IIRA.org/news/events.asp on January 22, 2008.**

Location

Holiday Inn City Centre, 500 Hamilton Blvd., Peoria, IL 61602.
Telephone number (309) 674-2500.

Lodging

Rooms at reduced rates have been set aside for conference participants at the Holiday Inn City Centre. Rates per night are single (\$69) or double (\$79). All rooms are subject to availability; to receive this rate, reservations must be made by **February 18, 2008**. For reservations, phone the Holiday Inn City Centre at (800) 474-2501. Be sure to ask for the Rural Community Economic Development Conference rate.

Parking

Hotel guests must have parking validated at the hotel registration desk before checking out. Conference attendees who are not staying at the hotel but who park at the hotel can get parking validated at conference registration desk. Guests driving vans should call ahead to ensure that they meet garage height restrictions. Parking is also available at several nearby garages. Call the hotel at (800) 474-2501 for more information.

Questions?

Call Carol Harper at (309) 298-2637, or toll free at (800) 526-9943, or send e-mail to: CS-Harper@wiu.edu.

The announcement and program are also available on our Web site: **www.IIRA.org**.

Rural Community Economic Development:
Finding Innovative Solutions

Conference Sponsors

Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs

Governor's Rural Affairs Council

Rural Partners

Illinois Small Business Development Center
Western Illinois University

USDA-Rural Development

Verizon Foundation

Thomas N. Jacob and Associates
The Economic Development Group, Ltd.

Ameren Services

Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago

Western Illinois University Libraries



**WESTERN
ILLINOIS
UNIVERSITY**