Extension-Led Economic Development Organizations
CDS Annual Conference, Cincinnati OH.

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION
Basic Definition

• A County-wide Economic Development Organization led by Extension staff, typically a CD Educator and one or two program or support staff, as the single or primary economic development office within the (typically rural) county.
Presentation Parameters

• What does Extension bring to the table?
• Common principles
• Case study examples
  – Van Wert
  – Wyandot
• Survey results
• Next steps
What does Extension Bring to the Table?

- Neutrality
- Accountability
- Credibility to rural community
- Main campus resources
- Professional network
- Structure helps to build and leverage funding resources
Principles and Barriers

• ED programming to meet local needs.
• Engage local clientele to foster community involvement.
• Leverage state & local partnerships.
• Collaborative approach – build trust.
• Build sustainable communities.
• Develop funding streams to support CED goals and programming.
• Traditional vs. institutional economic dev.
New Funding Sources Leveraged

- Share project costs among multiple organizations
- Private sector donations or memberships
- Foundation annual contributions
- Regional, state or federal grants (USDA)
- Dedicated funding through levy’s and/or property transfer fees
- Administrative or organizational management fees
Van Wert County Model

• County and City joined forces to establish cooperative agreement with OSU Extension to establish ED office.
• Two person office serving county with extension of services into 20 county region.
• Funding base split between hotel/motel tax (50%), OSU (15%) and other (35%).
• Donations, fees for services, grants and cost sharing with other CD entities.
  – Revolving Loan Fund Program
Van Wert County Outcomes

• Since 2000 leveraged $21.2 million for CED and business retention or expansion projects, resulting in creation of over 1,500 jobs.
• Two loan funds with portfolio of $2.5 million, 55 loans and 375 new jobs.
• Grew industrial park from one business with 40 jobs and 20,000 sq. ft. to eight companies with 500 jobs and 1/2 million sq. ft. of building space.
• Spun-off Main Street and CVB offices. Re-established Port Authority and CIC.
Wyandot County Model

• 2006 OSU BR&E program identified the need for an county economic development office.

• The Wyandot County Office of Economic Development (WCOED) is structured as a private / public partnership with support from the Board of Wyandot County Commissioners, local municipalities, Wyandot Memorial hospital, and private sector businesses.

• The WCOED commits funding to OSU Extension to support a portion of the Community Development Extension Educators time in Wyandot County.
Wyandot County Outcomes

• Grew local membership leveraging over $225,000.

• Secured $580,000 grant dollars for CED and business development projects since 2009.

• Established an 12 MW solar field which provides significant tax revenue generation for the community.

• BR&E/New Business Attraction efforts led to 75 jobs and 70,000 sq. ft. building.

• Developed new industrial park in the Village of Carey.

• In process of establishing Revolving Loan Fund.
Survey Feedback

• Web-based program evaluation in early 2011
  – Fixed choice: change in knowledge, awareness, behavior, capacity, as well as value and effectiveness
  – Open-ended: program value, effectiveness

• Feedback provided by 42 of the 100 community partners invited to participate
Survey Feedback

• 74% indicated the partnership is very effective for the community in general

• Because of our local community economic development program efforts:
  
  – 97.6 % agree (45.2% strongly agree & 52.4% agree) local stakeholders are more engaged in collaborative efforts.

  – 97.6 % indicate their understanding of economic development strategies has increased (52.4% Very Much & 45.2% Somewhat).
Survey Feedback

• Key themes:
  – Compared to past efforts without OSU partnerships: OSU is the difference-maker
  – Access to vast array of OSU resources is highly valued
  – How can we continue to leverage our resources to gain access to new resources?
Next Steps

- Build body of work around case studies
  - Short, medium and long term
  - Include other states
- Produce curriculum & training documents
- Report results
- Replicate

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Questions?

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