

# COMMUNITY CONNECTION

A QUARTERLY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER



## WELCOME!

## DEVELOPMENT SPOTLIGHT



### COMMUNITY COACHING ACADEMY BRINGS A NEW APPROACH TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The craft of coaching others has been around for many years, but applying concepts of “coaching” to a community improvement group is a new application of the concept. Kansas State University is currently exploring the research and practice behind the concept of community coaching, and is actively building the extension skill base to provide coaching as a community development resource. The K-State Center for Engagement and Community Development is working with the Huck Boyd National Center for Rural Development and the Kansas PRIDE program on this project, as well as several other governmental and non-governmental partners.

At a basic level, community coaches will facilitate evaluative listening sessions with community-improvement groups, a strategic planning team or other community organization. The community coach will help them “think out loud” about their vision, goals, strategies for public inclusion, progress measurement, or

to work through roadblocks they have encountered.

**“The implications of this community agency and capacity building are far reaching.”**

The implications of this community agency and capacity building are far reaching. It is anticipated that community coaching has the potential to help communities strengthen social networks, expand opportunities for civic involvement, aid community decision-making and encourage a broader network of citizen access to community resources. With coaching, we anticipate that community teams will increase their public transparency and increase levels of community trust and involvement. Thus community coaching will prove itself valuable for expanding potential for community action, expanded community services and a higher level of community readiness and resiliency to address community issues

or crises events. The extension PRIDE program anticipates engaging a dozen to twenty coaches to work with community groups starting in 2011. **To learn more about the community-coaching project, visit [www.ksu.edu/cecd/cda](http://www.ksu.edu/cecd/cda) or contact the KSU Center for Engagement and Community Development at 785-532-6868.**

*Submitted by: Dan Kahl, Extension Liaison, Center for Engagement and Community Development.*

## Natural Capital and Community Wealth

Where does your community's drinking water come from? Does your community have a household hazardous waste collection event to help homeowners get rid of the hazardous materials, such as weed killer, or other chemical cleaners used around the house?

The Healthy Ecosystems-Healthy Communities (HEHC) Project helps communities with answers to these questions and more. Your community's natural resources and amenities such as lakes, creeks and rivers are important. People want to live and work where there are good water supplies and recreational opportunities. And everyone knows this—if your house or land borders a clean lake, river, or a source of good water, it's more valuable!

The HEHC program isn't just about clean water. But a good supply of clean surface and ground water is intimately linked to a healthy ecosystem and a healthy ecosystem is vital to a healthy community. The HEHC is a community-based program to help a community group engage citizens in a process to explore local natural resources and help your community develop a plan to protect those resources for you and your children's future.

The HEHC program offers many benefits and resources to communities:

1. A way to engage others in your community and its future
2. A process your PRIDE group can use to evaluate any project for community benefit
3. A plan for using and developing your community's



resources in a sustainable way.

What do communities do to protect water quality and their natural environment? Many things! Some communities have undertaken public education programs to teach citizens how to handle wastes such as household chemicals that are harmful to the environment or animal wastes that pollute water supplies.

Rossville, one of the first communities to

participate in the HEHC natural resource planning process, turned a swampy, mosquito area into a beautiful rain garden. Melvern, another HEHC community, built 7 miles of walking/hiking trail by the Marais des Cygnes River. They'll use the trail to educate the public as well as local and area students about water quality, wildlife and native plants in a healthy ecosystem. In addition, their trail will be used for a community fitness program to improve citizen health in their community.

Want your community to participate in the Healthy Ecosystems-Healthy Communities project? Call Sherry Davis, the HEHC Project Coordinator, at 785-532-3039, to learn how communities can participate.

For more information please visit the HEHC website: <http://www.kansasprideprogram.ksu.edu/healthyecosystems/>.

*Submitted by: Sherry Davis, PRIDE HEHC Project Coordinator, 785-532-3039.*

## RESEARCH TOPICS

### Agritourism and Economic Development: Role of Research and Extension

Agritourism, some important facts: While agritourism has long existed in United States, the agriculture census for the first time included agritourism related questions in the 2007 survey (Das and Rainey, 2009). This is testament to the growing popularity and importance of this infant industry across the nation. Common agritourism activities include; farmers markets, u-pick operations, corn maze, pumpkin patches, wineries, ag-festivals and on-farm hunting and fishing. The profile of the majority of agritourism operations tend to be small and medium sized farms, family-managed, who are in it primarily for supplementing income or as a hobby and love for preserving their farm heritage. Income gets augmented, but there is no significant direct job creation as a result of agritour-

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ism businesses, mainly due to them being under family management. The existence of agritourism enterprises are not publicized as much through formal advertising on television or print media, but rather through word-of-mouth and road signs on state and inter-state highways. Extension networks in many states are aggressively bringing this discussion to community forums and shedding light on how this could be an engine of economic growth and bring communities closer. There is a paucity of academic research on U.S. agritourism, mainly attributable to non-availability of reliable secondary data on both providers and consumers of agritourism businesses (Das and Rainey, 2009).

#### What should extension professionals know?

Agritourism is critical to community and economic development for the following reasons. First, agritourism venues and events provide supplemental income to farmers and the rural communities that they live in, as well as help preserve and sustain family farms.

“Agritourism is critical to community and economic development...”

Second, agritourism helps to add value to crops, livestock and the natural resources that a farm has to offer, and offers an opportunity to build a bridge between the agricultural community and the local tourism industry by incorporating tour groups, educating school children and hosting civic events. These activities translate into dollars, which spill over to other sectors of the local economy, translating to jobs and augmented incomes. Third, agritourism gives people an opportunity to better understand and appreciate the skill and hard work that go into producing the food and fiber we all enjoy. There are several aspects to agritourism that are highly essential for an existing or a potential operator to be knowledgeable about: economic, legal, marketing, educational, retailing and financing.

**How can K-state research and extension assist interested communities?** Extension personnel can and need to: (1) bring this discussion to community forums and highlight the accomplishments of communities that have used agritourism as an avenue for positive economic and community activity; (2) develop and disseminate well-researched materials and brochures that are valuable instruments to stimulate community thinking; (3) educate community leaders and citizenry

on the need for, implications and potential of a high growth agritourism industry that can: (a) trigger local economic growth; (b) contain rising transportation costs and increase energy security; (c) build social and political capital; (d) be a good quality of life indicator; (e) build positive perception of and toward the community. Agritourism can by itself be a stand-alone economic development program that can be adopted by communities, supported by K-state research and extension.

Submitted by: Biswa Das, K-State Community Development Economist, [bdas@ksu.edu](mailto:bdas@ksu.edu), (785)-532-1514

Das, Biswa R and Daniel V Rainey, 'Agritourism in the Arkansas Delta Byways: Assessing the Economic Impacts', *International Journal of Tourism Research*, (forthcoming, 2009)

<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/122658945/PDFSTART>

## COMMUNITY CAPITAL

### Focus on Social Capital Research

If you have read anything about social capital, you will know that American political scientist, Robert Putnam, brought it into our contemporary vernacular, though he was not the first to recognize the importance of social networks and personal ties that humans have with our families, friends, and our professional associates. Putnam, (2000) came to define social capital as, “connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (p. 19). Putnam stressed the importance of community, which he broadly defined as a grouping of individuals with shared interests, common goals, similar beliefs, and comparable thought processes.

The idea of social capital is not new. Circa 1831, French sociologist, Alexis de Toqueville, described the social capital of Americans in his, *Democracy in America*. He observed that Americans, no matter their circumstances, had an inclination toward associations with one another in informal settings, and they transferred to their civil lives those ideas gathered in private involvement for later benefit. Regarding social capital, in 1916, L.J. Hanifan urged community (civic) involvement in public schools. He believed social capital was that which came from good will, fellowship, sympathy and social intercourse among individuals and families

(as cited in Putnam, 2000). Social norms therefore, were those written and unwritten laws to which people adhered to for a unit's external and internal governance. The opposite was deviant or unlawful behavior (Durkin, 2000). Reciprocity referred to the favors that people did for one another, without expectation of return, but was usually returned at one time or another. The simple adage of, "you scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours" was exemplified by this concept (Putnam, 1997; p. 20). Trustworthiness was defined by a person's belief that people are generally good, and they act toward one another in kind. Also, they have the expectation that other people will treat them fairly (Putnam, 1993). Pierre Bourdieu defined social capital as the "persistent social ties that enable a group to constitute, maintain, and reproduce itself." He promoted it as a collective rather than an individual possession. Writing for the World Bank Social Capital Initiative, Michael Woolcock and Deepa Narayan (1999) described social capital using the axiom, "It's not what you know; it's who you know." They went on to assert that a basic idea of social capital was that one's family, friends, and associates constituted an important asset (capital). Social capital could be called upon in a crisis, enjoyed for its own sake, and/or leveraged for material gain. In the next newsletter, I hope to define types of social capital, and expand on how the strengthening of social capital can influence the impact and delivery of Extension programs. This discussion will go on, and research is happening in all over the world. I provide this information as a primer to add to your own understanding of this currency we call, social capital.

*Submitted by: Debra Bolton, Extension Specialist,  
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## BOOK REVIEW

### Hollowing Out the Middle

(Adapted from: *How They Missed the Meaning in the Middle*)

**HOLLOWING OUT THE MIDDLE: THE RURAL BRAIN DRAIN AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR AMERICA.** Patrick Carr and Maria Kefalas (2009); Boston: Beacon Press.

*Hollowing Out the Middle* is not only the title of a book by sociologists, Patrick Carr and Maria Kefalas (2009), but "hollowing" describes the depopulation of rural areas and small towns due to lack of well-paying jobs, viable schools and inspirational leadership.

*Hollowing Out the Middle* describes the multi-year effort that Carr and Kefalas undertook to study a small town (population 2000) in Iowa. Not only did the authors conduct hundreds of interviews of people who had left the town, but who continued to live there well after they left high school, but they also lived in the town for a summer with their young daughter. Their study leads them to conclude that there are four groups of young people who may or may not remain or return to their home town after high school. Those groups are:

- Achievers: those who are groomed from childhood to see their future away from their home town and to leave – and never return – via opportunities provided through a college education.
- Stayers: those who were expected to stay and do stay since the town's leaders, schools and social circles wrote them off early due to who their families were, the challenges they experienced in public schools, or their second-class status due to race, income or nationality. In their book, Carr and Kefalas make the case that under-valued Stayers may have been the drivers in the early days of the methamphetamine epidemic that enveloped many Midwest states nearly 20 years ago. They provide evidence that the emptying out of inner cities in the 1990s due to crack cocaine is illustrative of the phenomena that is taking hold in many rural areas due to meth.
- Seekers: those who seek to leave like the Achievers, but who don't have access to college scholarships, money or strong extended families in other states, so they leave their towns by joining the

military, exiting gradually through community colleges or through marriage, etc.

- Returners: which are comprised of two groups of people who return to their home towns after exiting. Boomerangs are those who “return home after their new lives have failed to take hold, “(p 107) and the High Flyers are those who have been successful after exiting, but who choose to return to their home towns for security, quality-of-life factors or “personal reasons”.

Carr and Kefalas conclude their book with recommendations for the sustainment of small towns which include ideas for immigration, investment in Stayers as much as Achievers, and refocusing schools away from exclusively preparing Achievers to leave to equipping the Stayers to thrive. Examples of successful initiatives, such as Ellsworth, KS are given as well as the not-so-successful “Life/Changing “campaign in Iowa.

Though the authors may not have been fully appreciative of the positive quality-of-life in rural communities, the message of *Hollowing Out the Middle* cannot be ignored. It is essential that small towns in rural states understand the importance of their social and cultural capital and take steps to sustain it through social, cultural and economic improvements targeting Stayers, Seekers as well as Returners. The old adage “A bird in the hand is better than two in the bush” applies since leaders and decision-makers in small towns cannot afford to ignore or de-value the people who continue to live in their towns. Even though the Achievers who leave and do “great things with their lives” make some of us feel proud, it’s a reality that the Achievers are gone and may not return.

I recommend that you read *Hollowing out the Middle* and be prepared to feel motivated, depressed and frustrated in varying degrees. However, if you want to feel hopeful, and be inspired work talk to the kids who are still in town, still going to school and still see the opportunities that can make small town living so great!

*Prepared by: Elaine Johannes, PhD, Extension Specialist, Youth Development K-State Research and Extension*

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SPOTLIGHT

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making and encourage a broader network of citizen access to community resources.

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or crises events. The extension PRIDE program anticipates engaging a dozen to twenty coaches to work with community groups starting in 2011.

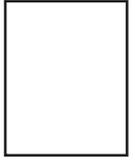
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*Submitted by: Dan Kahl, Extension Liaison, Center for Engagement and Community Development.*



**Coaches Participating in the Independence, KS Coaching Academy**

Return address



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# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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