

Introduction and Background

For over 40 years, Don Macke with **e2 Entrepreneurial Ecosystems** has been working throughout North America focusing on rural community economic development. Central to this work has been a core focus on entrepreneur-led development and entrepreneurial ecosystem building. As part of this extensive field work, e2 and its predecessor organizations has been completing **Development Opportunity Profiles**, identifying likely entrepreneurial development opportunities for specific rural communities.

Development Opportunity Profiles (DOPs)

Over the decades, our [Development Opportunity Profiles](#) and analysis has evolved, and we believe become more valuable to rural communities and regions. These profiles can be used in conjunction with one of the three primary opportunity assessments within our [e2 Development Framework](#):

1. Entrepreneurial Development Opportunities
2. Entrepreneurial Talent
3. Entrepreneurial Resources

At e2, we are committed to continuous improvement in our community-centered analytics in support of building smart rural community entrepreneurial strategies.

e2's Likely Entrepreneurial Development Opportunities

Our paper – [Likely Entrepreneurial Development Opportunities](#) – captures our top 10 opportunities based on this rural community analytic work. From this work we curated a list of the top 10 **most likely** entrepreneur development opportunities common in rural communities across North America. The following summarizes our top 10, in no particular order:

	<p>Natural Resources. Much of rural America depends upon single natural resource industry economies (e.g., farming, mining, forestry, energy, etc.). While there are limited entrepreneurial development opportunities related to these international market industries, there are opportunities rooted in diversifying within these sectors and increasing sector related spending capture.</p>
	<p>Transportation Corridors. Urban America is connected by transportation corridors that run through rural America. Services are required to support those traveling these corridors, creating entrepreneurial development opportunities.</p>



Tourism. While the vast majority of Americans live and work in urban America, rural America provides important places to play. For a wide range of rural communities and regions, tourism represents a way to diversify area economies.



Retirees. When thinking of new residents, keep in mind the tidal wave of retiring Boomers. This group represents a significant likely entrepreneurial development opportunity for most rural communities, from high amenity places to rural villages adjacent to metro centers.



Commuters. Upward of 50 percent of rural workers live in one community and work in another community. These outbound commuters have embedded entrepreneurial development opportunities in creating bedroom community-related development and entrepreneurial opportunities when they end their commuting.



Hub Cities. America’s landscape is still defined by a hierarchy of places based on size. In rural America, there are regional and area hub cities and towns that provide critical services like healthcare, shopping, and entertainment to rural areas. These communities are the “downtowns” of vast rural regions to smaller areas.



Larger Employer Retention and Expansion. Many rural communities are home to large manufacturing plants, fulfillment centers and institutions including hospitals, regional universities, and parks. Ensuring the future of these larger employers is an entrepreneurial opportunity.



Growth-Oriented Entrepreneurs. Nearly every rural community has growth-oriented entrepreneurs with the motivation and capacity to reach external markets with their products and services. Electronic commerce empowers this kind of entrepreneurship.



Area Spending Capture. Competition is intense from box stores, franchise, and electronic commerce, but opportunities exist to increase local venture competitiveness and recapture some of these spending leakages. In doing so, rural communities can empower growth-oriented entrepreneurs.



New Residents. Since the 1900s, the primary migration pattern has been from rural to urban. Today, there are counter (e.g., urban-to-rural) migration trends among 30-year-olds, retiring Boomers and others. These new residents represent a huge opportunity to energize area entrepreneurial talent.

Regional Community Economic Development. While regional development is not one of our top 10 likely entrepreneurial development opportunities, we strongly recommend every rural community embrace, with other communities in their region of America, larger-scale regional development. When more communities in a region are thriving, opportunities are created for your community and your entrepreneurs. Check out our **Regional Development** strategy guide in our Likely Entrepreneurial Development Opportunities [resource library](#). Additionally, growing entrepreneurial ecosystems is best done regionally, hopefully with state-level support. We recommend a top-down and bottom-up entrepreneurship strategy as outlined in our paper, [Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Building in Rural America, Four Decades of Learning](#).

To learn more about these top 10 Likely Entrepreneurial Development Opportunities and our evolving collection of associated strategy papers, please visit our website's [resource library](#).

The Strategy Guide Collection

Some development opportunities are more universal, like increasing area spending capture. Other opportunities are contingent upon certain area assets, such as destination tourism or the presence of

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Likely Entrepreneurial Development Opportunities Strategy Guides – *The Collection*

growth-oriented entrepreneurs. For smaller rural communities, there are likely three to five relevant development opportunities. For larger communities, chances are good there are five to seven development opportunities. In some asset rich rural communities, all 10 strategies are in play.

Our Team. These Likely Entrepreneurial Development Opportunity Strategy Guides are authored by Don Macke and Kimberlee Spillers with [Rural Community Solutions](#).

For More Information

We hope these **Likely Entrepreneurial Development Opportunities Strategy Guides** can help your corner of rural America commit to and engage in high impact entrepreneur-led development and entrepreneurial ecosystem building. Your feedback, stories and guidance are welcome. Share your input with **Don Macke** at don@e2mail.org.