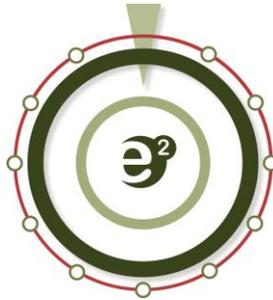


Center for Rural Entrepreneurship

energizing entrepreneurial communities



ENTREPRENEURS

A People Attraction Guide



Originally published in 2009

About This Guide

The key to attracting young, talented people to your community is creating career opportunities. For many communities, creating new jobs is hard but creating more attractive career-oriented jobs is a real challenge. Attracting and retaining entrepreneurs is the best way to create new jobs. Entrepreneurial ventures create jobs and have the great potential to create a broader range of career opportunities for young adults that want to come home.

HTC Partners

Our People Attraction Initiative is enabled by HomeTown Competitiveness and its founding partners the Nebraska Community Foundation, the Heartland Center for Leadership Development and the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship. This work has been made possible through the generous support of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

Center for Rural Entrepreneurship. The Center's mission is to help community leaders build a prosperous future by supporting and empowering business, social and civic entrepreneurs. With our roots and hearts in rural America, we help communities of all sizes and interests by bringing empowering research together with effective community engagement to advance community-driven strategies for prosperity. For more information, visit our site at www.energizingentrepreneurs.org.

Nebraska Community Foundation. The Nebraska Community Foundation has completed wealth transfer analysis for each of Nebraska's 93 counties. Rural residents do not always recognize local wealth because so much of it is held through land ownership. Most people are at first shocked, and then highly motivated, once they understand the enormous amount of local wealth that will likely transfer to heirs who have migrated out of the area. In rural Nebraska alone, more than \$94 billion is at stake over the next few decades. Both the power and the will to use these assets will no longer be tied to the community unless planned gifts are cultivated now. Using this data, HTC sets a reasonable target of converting at least 5% of the local wealth transfer into charitable assets endowed in community foundations to fund future community and economic development efforts. For more information, visit the Foundation's web site at www.nebcommfound.org.

Heartland Center for Leadership Development. For small towns to compete in the 21st century, they must tap into everyone's potential knowledge, talent and aspirations. The Heartland Center for Leadership Development rejects the outdated notion of relying on "the usual suspects" to get things done. Rural communities must be intentional about recruiting and nurturing an increasing number of women, minorities and young people into decision-making roles. They need continuing leadership training programs, because today's leadership must constantly reinvent itself to reflect the challenges of a changing global environment. For more information, visit Heartland's web site at www.heartlandcenter.info.



Contents

Why Entrepreneur Attraction?
Youth & Young Adult Entrepreneurs
Business Opportunities
Lifestyle Motivation
Following a Loved One
Retirees
Keys to Success
Building Your Community's Game Plan
Making a Commitment
Strategy Development
Implementation
Tracking Progress

Background & Introduction

Michigan, like many areas of the world, is challenged with severe economic change. A recent report by Michigan Futures says a lot about the importance of both people attraction and entrepreneur attraction in the 21st Century.

Rich Kargaard, the Publisher of Forbes is quoted in this report:

“Start with the proposition: The most valuable resource in the 21st Century is brains. Smart people tend to be mobile. Watch where they go: Because where they go, robust economic activity will follow.” [Michigan Future, Inc. – 07/08]



**Pam Curry, CEO
Center for Economic Options**

Mr. Kargaard’s observation is on target in our opinion. But it does not address the fact that we (as communities) can influence where people go. Just as a company can influence a consumer to buy a product or a college can influence a student to attend, rural communities, through people attraction strategies, can compete for human talent.

The Michigan Future’s Report goes on to state:

“What distinguishes successful areas from Michigan is their concentrations of talent, where talent is defined as a combination of knowledge, creativity and entrepreneurship.”

[Michigan Future, Inc. - July 2008]

People Attraction Guides

The HTC Partnership through generous support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation has prepared a series of People Attraction Guides to enable rural communities to take advantage of this development opportunity.

Overview. We have an Overview Guide that is a primer on this development opportunity and the basics of strategy building.

Opportunity Guides. Based on our field experience we have prepared guides around five specific people attraction opportunities common to most rural communities:

- Youth
- Families
- Entrepreneurs
- Professionals
- Retirees

For additional information on HTC’s People Attraction Resources, contact Don Macke with the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship at 402.323.7339 or don@e2mail.org.

Attracting entrepreneurial talent can be significantly important to your community's ability to grow economic opportunity and ensure a brighter future. This Guide shares insight on how your community can build an **Entrepreneur Attraction Strategy** capable of supporting both population and economic growth. We believe there is ample evidence that attracting entrepreneurs to your community can produce a third benefit – development of a more attractive and interesting community. Entrepreneurs are powerful change agents who can revitalize both economies and societies. Their tendencies toward innovation and creativity can result in revitalized main streets and communities with stronger quality of life amenities.

A Library for You

Our People Attraction Team has developed a library collection relating to each of our guides. We would be happy to work with your community to produce a library of supporting books (like Life 2.0), articles and other resource materials. These libraries can be customized and are priced at our cost plus shipping and handling.

Rich Karlgaard back in 2004 wrote a wonderful book titled **Life 2.0**. The subtitle for this book is “How people across America are transforming their lives by finding the where of their happiness.” Karlgaard’s book is full of stories of interesting people who choose to live in places off the beaten path and, through entrepreneurship, create both economic success and personal fulfillment. We recommend **Life 2.0** as it will provide you and your community a deeper sense of the entrepreneur attraction opportunity.

Our world is changing and changing rapidly. Economic development is no different. The emerging development opportunity of entrepreneur related people attraction is real. For the past 50 years, our rural communities diversified and grew through business attraction. We believe in the next 50 years, similar growth and opportunities will be realized through people attraction. A strategic focus on attracting entrepreneurs is powerfully important as you craft your community's development game plan.

Creative people, who have choices of where they live, are seeking communities that can meet their particular needs. Our Guides on people attraction offer insight into this important set of trends. Now that we have introduced this idea of entrepreneur attraction, let us explore in a bit more depth why this opportunity for development should be considered by your community.

New Opportunity

The stories of talented people moving to high amenity communities like Vail, Colorado are well known. You do not have to be at Vail to consider a people attraction strategy. Not everyone is seeking a mountain home. Your community may well offer a package of amenities that is attractive to a significant number of potential recruits. You can build on your strengths and you can successfully recruit entrepreneurs to your community.



Bob Ho's Many Kinds of Entrepreneurs

Bob Ho was a remarkable (now retired) rural developer from Maine. When Bob was leading the Maine Rural Development Council, he helped lead an important initiative to increase Maine's economic development focus on entrepreneurs. Bob was a pioneer in this field and he observed an important truth – there are “many faces of entrepreneurs.” What Bob was observing is that entrepreneurs include everyone from bright eyed startups to the Bill Gates of the world who create corporations with international footprints.

Dr. Deborah Markley with the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship took Bob Ho's many faces idea and created a typology of entrepreneurs that is widely used in the United States today. The “Markley Typology” begins with those who have a motivation and potential to become entrepreneurs including youth, aspiring and startups. The next group includes those already in business and engaging in entrepreneurial activity in order to survive, re-invent, re-start or improve their business. Finally, we have those who are full-fledged entrepreneurs including “Es” with growth orientations, serial entrepreneurs and high growth or gazelles.

For more information on the various kinds of entrepreneurial talent check out:

www.energizingentrepreneurs.org

Why Entrepreneur Attraction?

For most of rural America, development opportunities in the old economy were rooted in:

- Branch Plant Relocation.
- Back Office and Telecommunication Centers.
- Traditional Manufacturing.
- High Volume and High Impact Tourism.
- Commodity Based Production Agriculture.

Today and tomorrow, development opportunities in the new economy are increasingly rooted in:

- Footloose Knowledge Workers – Lone Eagles.
- Small Corporate Headquarters Linked to the World Economy.
- Knowledge Based Niche Businesses.
- Green Energy and Nature Tourism.
- Niche Agriculture.

Our economic transformation is being driven by a growing number of small, creative and nimble entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship is rising as the key agent of economic renewal because of:

- Corporate and Government Outsourcing.
- Market and Social Globalization.
- Rapidly Improving Telecommunications Capabilities.
- An Affluent Class Seeking Quality of Place for Life and Work.
- Renewed Value of Place and Community.



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Larger corporate and government institutions are not going away. In fact, they are becoming larger and more important in our global market based economy. But their growth is being realized through flexible networks and joint ventures with smaller and medium sized entrepreneurial companies and NGOs (non-governmental organizations).

Rural America has gone through distinct phases of development:

- Settlement and Town Building.
- Rise of World Class Agriculture.
- Movement of Industry from Urban to Rural America.
- Rise of Rural America as an Increasingly Desirable Place to Live and Earn a Living.

Today we are well into this latest development phase. One of the most promising and significant 21st Century development opportunities is entrepreneur attraction. Figure 1 summarizes three of the most important rationales for your community's consideration of entrepreneur attraction as part of your people attraction and economic development game plan.

Figure 1 – Case for Entrepreneur Attraction

Creative Force	In the New Economy, talent and creativity are the roads to economic prosperity. Developing and attracting entrepreneurial talent within our communities ensures we have a creative force that can help us achieve economic relevance and success in the 21st Century. Communities without such entrepreneurial talent are likely to decline and struggle in the future.
Economic Engine	Two-thirds of job creation and business growth are created by small and medium sized entrepreneurial ventures. Developing and growing entrepreneurial talent within your community creates a powerful economic engine that can drive job creation, investment and tax base growth.
New Leadership	Entrepreneurs focus on opportunity and are remarkable problem solvers. Developing and attracting entrepreneurial talent within your community can energize your leadership pool. Such leadership can help your community realize better schools, address housing needs and move into the future with vision.

We can create a longer list of reasons why entrepreneur attraction should be considered by most rural communities. But possibly the most compelling reason for considering this option is “opportunity!” Entrepreneurs are on the move. Many entrepreneurs are looking for the right place to live and raise a family. Some entrepreneurs want a rural lifestyle and a smaller community quality of life. Play to this strength and then ensure your community has the right stuff to enable entrepreneurs to succeed.



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Now let us turn our attention to possible opportunity groups your community can build people attraction strategy around.

Five Opportunities. For most rural communities we believe there are five groups of entrepreneurs that could be attracted to your community:

Group 1 – Youth & Young Adults

Group 2 – Those Seeking a Business Opportunity

Group 3 – Those Motivated by Lifestyle Changes

Group 4 – Those Following a Loved One

Group 5 – Retirees

Figure 2 –Entrepreneur Attraction Opportunities

<p><i>Group 1</i> Youth & Young Adults</p>	<p>We assume many young adults want to go to college to prepare for a white collar profession. But for many youth and young adults, entrepreneurship can be the ticket to personal and economic success. The idea of being their own boss and running their own business is very attractive and could make the case to return or move to your community.</p>
<p><i>Group 2</i> Business Opportunities</p>	<p>Not everyone is focused on pursuing a specific occupation or career. Many Americans are open to doing a wide range of things in order to make a living. For some, they are seeking a business opportunity to build both a career and meet personal economic needs.</p>
<p><i>Group 3</i> Lifestyle Changes</p>	<p>There are hundreds of reasons why people want to change their lives. Deaths, lost jobs, desire to be close to family, crime, congestion or simply the desire to be able to hunt or fish can motivate a location to your rural community. For those seeking a lifestyle change, there may not be a ready job for them and business ownership can be the economic solution enabling a desired move.</p>
<p><i>Group 4</i> Following a Loved One</p>	<p>Most rural communities have experienced the challenge of wanting to hire a new doctor, school superintendent or other position and not having a good job match for their spouse. Entrepreneurship can often represent a positive outlet for spouses who are following a loved one to your community.</p>
<p><i>Group 5</i> Retirees</p>	<p>Many folks of retirement age either need to continue to work or want to work part-time. Business ownership represents a key opportunity for these retirees to keep active and generate income. We have a specific Guide on attracting retirees. You may want to review this Guide in support of strategy building.</p>

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There are most likely other opportunity groups, but building strategy to attract these five groups will provide your community with a strong foundation for entrepreneur based development.

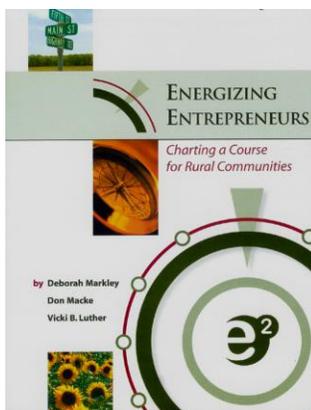
Traditional economic development – rooted in business attraction – was all about providing the right business climate. Power rates, access to railroads, shipping distances to urban markets, labor force and buildable sites were key considerations. With entrepreneur attraction, we must first focus on the needs and wants of the entrepreneur as a person with a family. Once these needs are met, then we must focus on what is necessary to create a supportive entrepreneurial climate.

Always remember, entrepreneurs are people. They come in all ages, genders and life situations. For many entrepreneurs, their first consideration is where they want to live knowing that they can create economic opportunities through their entrepreneurship.

In the following sections to this Guide we explore a bit more about these opportunity groups and what your community can do to attract them.

Business Attraction – Entrepreneur Attraction

Since World War II, most communities have embraced business attraction as a core economic development strategy. We have extensive experience with business attraction that can serve as an asset for entrepreneur attraction. Many of the strategy elements we perfected in business attraction have application to entrepreneur attraction. Skill sets around marketing, targeting, hosting and ensuring proper business climate can all apply to an entrepreneur attraction strategy. Explore what you have been doing with business attraction and with some modest shifts in emphasis, you can support an entrepreneur attraction game plan.



Energizing Entrepreneurs: Charting a Course for Rural Communities can be purchased at www.heartlandcenter.info. Additional free entrepreneurship related resources can be found at the web site of the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship at www.energizingentrepreneurs.org. The Center also produces a free electronic newsletter and you can subscribe [here](#).

Youth and Young Adult Entrepreneurs

Research by Craig Schroeder with the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship provides us some powerful insight on youth and young adults as entrepreneurs. Craig's research centers on asking youth and young adults about their preferences through both survey and focus group activities. Here is what he is finding:

- Upwards to 50% of all rural youth would prefer to live a small town and rural lifestyle. However, most of these youth do not believe it will be possible for them to make this choice.
- Many youth already are entrepreneurs and have businesses. The lack of employment opportunities in rural communities, coupled with family traditions of entrepreneurship lead many youth to create their own businesses.
- Most youth are very interested in entrepreneurship and would like to learn more about this as a life choice and career option.
- Youth know that education is essential to personal and economic success, but that pursuing a white collar job working for government or a large corporation may not be the right choice for them. Many youth are attracted to the idea of being their own boss and owning their business.

Craig's research suggests a powerful opportunity for rural communities to attract youth and young adults home through entrepreneurship. While many rural communities cannot offer the wide range of job and career opportunities present in larger communities, most rural communities do have multiple avenues for business ownership.



In Ord, NE there is a focus on helping young people become entrepreneurs. Pictured here is Nancy Glaubke (Ord's business coach) and her band of middle school entrepreneurs.

We have prepared a specific Guide that focuses on Youth and Young Adult Attraction. We urge you to review it as it expands on our write-up in this Guide. Now that we have outlined this opportunity based on Craig's important research, let us take a look at the kinds of things your community needs to do to be competitive for attracting youth and young adults to your community. The following figure summarizes key amenities that rural communities should develop to position themselves for youth and young adult entrepreneur attraction.

Figure 3 –Youth Entrepreneur Amenities

Start Early	Start with the youth and young adult entrepreneurs already in your community. Find out who they are, engage with them and build a supportive environment for youth and young adult entrepreneurship. With this as a foundation, your attraction game plan becomes much easier.
Community Validation	We love our kids, but we often are less willing to accept their influence and choices in our rural communities. As a community, we must be willing to provide the room, support and validation of younger entrepreneurs and their business ventures.
Coaching	Coaching is widely accepted among youth and young adults as a preferred method for providing business development services. It is important that your coaching team include younger coaches who can relate to younger entrepreneurs.
Peers, etc.	Peers are essential to all age groups, but particularly youth and younger adults. Ensuring and enabling peer groups, mentors and networks are very important to attracting and retaining youth and young adult entrepreneurs.
Desired Infrastructure	So what kinds of infrastructure do youth and young adult entrepreneurs desire? Housing - Provide the right kind of housing choices including apartments, condos and main street lofts. Gathering Places - Young people are social and need the right kind of gathering places to support social interaction. IT – Youth and young adults have grown up with advanced telecommunications. High speed internet, quality cell phone service and the like are essential. Basics – As with other businesses, there will be need for same day parcel services, workspaces and basic business services.

In conclusion, we strongly believe if your community takes the time to really listen to those youth who have chosen to stay or move into your community, you will discover the keys to building a more intentional and effective youth entrepreneur attraction game plan. The key to market development always begins with your current customers. Every community has some youth entrepreneurs who have made the decision to call your community their hometown.

Business Opportunities

Millions of Americans have made their career and living through business ownership. During these difficult economic times, upwards of five million additional Americans may lose good paying jobs and many are choosing to create their own job through business ownership. While the 2007-2009 Recession will likely prove to be the most severe since the Great Depression, it will also spawn a new generation of business owners. A January 6, 2008 CNN story highlighted a recently laid-off Wall Street financial analyst. She lost a well-compensated job she loved, and became disillusioned with the uncertainty of working for someone else. She had decided to make a fundamental life change and pursue a dream. Today she has ventured into entrepreneurial waters and started a business teaching kids how to cook healthy foods. There are many stories like hers that highlight a trend that offers important opportunities for your community.

For many rural communities the owners and operators of most local businesses are aging. Business transition is a huge issue – being both a threat and an opportunity to your community's development. For those Americans looking to return home or make that fundamental change in their life to leave the city and live in smaller town America, you have the opportunity for a new generation of business owners. To some extent, some of this trend will occur in your community whether it is part of your development game plan or not. However, for those communities that make this part of your development game plan, the results can be significantly greater.

One way to explore this opportunity and move to action is to think about this as a simple puzzle. There are three parts to this puzzle that, when put together, can create a powerful development strategy:

Element 1 – Inventory Your Business Opportunities. Your community has businesses that can achieve greater success with the leadership of new owners. Your community has aging business owners who need an exit strategy. Your community has gaps in its business profile that provide opportunities for new businesses. Inventory all of these business opportunities.

Element 2 – Create Awareness. There may be people in your community who are interested in getting into business for themselves. And there may be potential buyers outside your community. Develop a marketing plan to identify these markets and communicate to them the opportunities that your community has to offer.

Element 3 – Community Support. Business transition and business startups are full of risk. The potential for failure is always present. But your community can assemble an array of resources that will increase the chances for success. Such resources also create a powerful marketing tool that makes your community more attractive to new owners. The Center for Rural Entrepreneurship has a wide



range of resources available that can help your community build such a support system for both new and existing business owners.

Now let us explore the core amenities that your community needs to cultivate to be competitive with business owner attraction. Figure 4 summarizes our recommendations.

Figure 4 –Business Owner Amenities

Business Opportunities	If you are trying to sell something and you do not know what you have to sell, you are facing failure. As a community, you need to begin to identify existing and new business opportunities that could be available to new owners. Work with existing owners and, just as real estate agents do, create confidential information on your possibilities that you can share with viable candidates.
Welcome Wagon	High touch counts. Taking a lesson from business attraction, you need a team that is willing to provide that personal touch with potential owners. Create a game plan for how you will track and work with them. Be smart, not every candidate is a good choice – be selective.
Branding & Marketing	Branding is the foundation of marketing. You need to begin to brand your community as one that welcomes new owners. Development of a simple brand and marketing strategy can position your community to be proactive. The process of building a plan can help your community get on board with this strategy.
Great Web Site	More and more, the primary source for information is the internet. Embrace it and use it. Development of a current and well-designed web site is essential. Make sure you build a team that can create and sustain your door to this and other markets.
Business Support Resources	Make sure you are service oriented. Identify and organize your business support resources. Study other communities to guide what resources you need and want. A strong business climate is essential to being competitive for potential owners.



Lifestyle Motivation

Not everyone wants to live in a big city with high-rises. Not everyone wants to live in the suburbs with strip malls. A significant number of our citizens want the kind of lifestyle that rural landscapes and smaller towns afford. For rural communities to thrive, we do not need everyone. We simply need more of those that want to live “rural” and “small town!” So what is it about smaller towns and rural landscapes that is a draw? Good question and you have the answer within your community. Ask your family, your friends, neighbors or co-workers, people who have recently moved into your community. They will create an exhaustive list of your community’s attractive features. Pulling all these preferences and reasons together will allow you to generate a picture of what you have to offer. Increasingly we care about lifestyle and are willing to make sacrifices to enable a particular lifestyle to be realized and sustained. In many cases, we are willing to be flexible with income, weather, career and even housing if that means we can live where we want. What are some of the responses you might hear when you ask this question of those who have chosen to live in a rural setting?

- I love to hunt and fish and want a place where that is possible.
- Having a small place and farming or ranching part-time is a dream of mine.
- I want just a few acres to have a horse and a big dog.
- I want to see the sun rise and set on the horizon and feel the weather.
- I want a place close to family and friends.
- I want a slower lifestyle where it is quiet on a Sunday.

There are hundreds of other reasons why folks want to live in a rural setting. In the end, they want what rural communities offer in some shape or focus. Your challenge is to know what the market wants, to understand how your community can satisfy these desires, and to communicate those qualities effectively.

Life is full of hard realities and one of those realities is the need to make a living. Part-time farming does not pay all the bills. Given the more limited choices for wage and salary jobs in most rural communities, entrepreneurship may be the best way to face up to the “make a living” reality. Our advice is to focus on those who want to live the kind of quality of life your community offers and help them make a living through local entrepreneurship.

In some, maybe even many cases, those wanting to live in your community may bring entrepreneurial opportunities with them. We remember the story of a college professor who wanted to live near her aging mother. She moved back home to her community of 360 residents and now teaches through distance learning for University of Phoenix. There are many stories like hers, of entrepreneurs who can



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bring their means of support with them, sustain themselves and diversify your economy in ways hard to imagine.

Others who want to live in your community may need some help. They may need help taking over a main street business or even starting a new business that can meet an important local need. Some will figure this out on their own while others may choose to not make this move because the challenges seem too great. If your community is ready to help, you can possibly sway some decisions in your favor and grow both your population and economy at the same time.

Now that we have talked a bit about why these folks might want to come to your community and make a living as entrepreneurs, let us now explore who they are. Chances are you will find folks that cover a wide range of backgrounds, but we have found there are some common characteristics to look for, including:

- They tend to be independent and looking for a change.
- They are willing to be flexible and accommodating.
- They want some control in their lives and work.
- They are open to options in what they do business wise.
- Most are capable and can learn to be successful.
- They may lack some experience and need some help.
- They want flexibility in what they do so they can enjoy their rural life passions like hunting on opening day.
- They may need some help fitting in and adjusting to smaller town life.
- They may bring their urban values and customs and make a few honest mistakes. Expect that.

Finally and possibly most importantly, they may be unsure of their decision. There is a chance they will not stick. How you treat them and support them may make all the difference in their ultimate decision and success with your community. Remember that new school and that first person who reached out to you to be your friend. It changed your feeling from fear to joy.

But let us be more candid and reality based – it will take more than a smile and a handshake to make this happen and happen more frequently. So what are some of the amenities your community should offer to be competitive for those entrepreneurs who are motivated to move to your community because of lifestyle choice? Let's explore this question next.

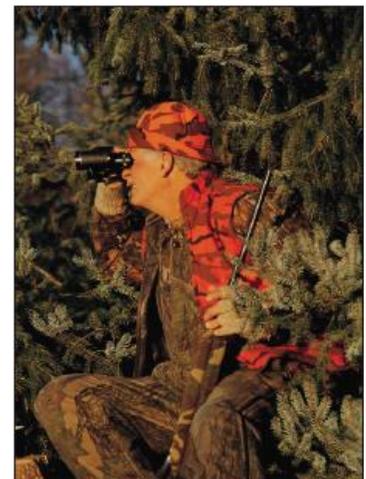


Figure 5 –Lifestyle Entrepreneur Amenities

<p>21st Century Life Essentials</p>	<p>Start by inventorying the essential community assets that entrepreneurs will expect and demand: access to high-quality health care and education; first rate communication connections; attractive housing. Complement that list by mapping the unique rural amenities that your community has to offer.</p>
<p>Welcoming Strategy</p>	<p>Chambers of Commerce use volunteers to help newcomers get settled. They provided high touch and personalized service. Find the old green or red jackets and make sure you have a high touch welcoming strategy.</p>
<p>Branding Marketing & Website</p>	<p>Brand yourself based on genuine rural life assets. Craft a reasonable marketing strategy that puts you out there. Have a strong web presence that gets you connected to prospects.</p>
<p>Investment Options</p>	<p>Be ready with both employment and business opportunities. Be proactive with business investment opportunities. Being organized in this way sends a very positive message that you are open for business and welcoming to newcomers.</p>
<p>Business Support Resources</p>	<p>As with other entrepreneurs, you will need to provide basic business support services. We recommend a local business coach approach. We have a great model you can use to set up business coaching. Let us know if you want more information on business coaching strategies.</p>



Following a Loved One

In the Norman Rockwell days, dad went to work and mom stayed home and took care of the kids. In today's economy, many if not most families find that both spouses are working. When one partner moves to a new community for a new job, the other spouse has the challenge of finding suitable work in the new community. With limited opportunities in smaller communities, solving this problem is crucial to the success of a people attraction strategy.

In too many cases, that new doctor, teacher or city manager does not stay because their spouse cannot find a good fit with their career preferences. Increasingly, if you are in the people recruitment game, you need to enable fits for members of your family team. In most cases you have folks who are willing to make adjustments and even compromises. But ultimately there needs to be a good fit that lasts or you might lose that ranch foreman, plant manager or new grocery store owner.

In rural communities where diverse openings of wage and salary jobs are more scarce, business ventures may provide that interesting, challenging and rewarding career fit for a spouse. So how can we make this happen? It might be useful to explore the circumstances we are likely to encounter to answer this question:

- They came because they love their spouse and wanted to support their career opportunity. They are facing the challenge of no job that is a good fit.
- They really need to work or they really want to work. They need something to do!
- They probably have talents and experiences that are relevant to career opportunities within your community.
- They may never have been in business and may need some help connecting the dots.

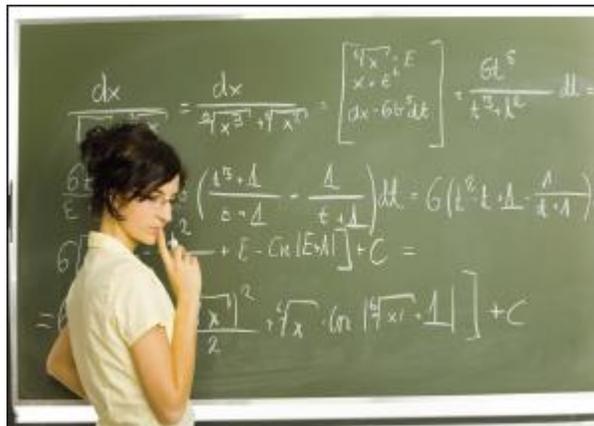
Your recognition of this challenge and your willingness to help sends a very important message that you really care. Your concern and assistance creates a remarkable welcome mat that buys your community time until a good fit can be found. Stay the course until the best possible fit can occur. By considering entrepreneurship, you open up a much wider range of interesting and potentially rewarding options. It gives your community a stronger game plan as you seek to attract new people to your corner of rural America.

So what are some of the support activities that these supportive spouses are likely to need? We explore this question with some insights in Figure 6.



Figure 6 –Following a Loved One Amenities

<p>Community Awareness</p>	<p>Most importantly, be aware of this challenge faced by trailing spouses. Be proactive and ready to help find opportunities for the second spouse. Be in contact, listen and act accordingly.</p>
<p>Opportunities</p>	<p>As is the case throughout this Guide, you need to be ready with your list of opportunities: Businesses seeking new managers; Businesses needing new owners; Businesses that need to be started.</p>
<p>Peer Support</p>	<p>This kind of life change can be really hard. Difficult challenges are somehow easier when there is peer understanding and support. Think about recruiting spouses who have worked through such changes. Empower a peer support group for newcomers.</p>
<p>Support Services</p>	<p>The same set of business support services apply here but with a twist. Combine your peer support with business support. Consider mentors who have made this change and are now in business. This is a great potential fit and can really make a difference to a newcomer who is also starting a new business venture.</p>



Retirees

Retirees comprise the most influential generation of contemporary times and 78 million Baby Boomers are now beginning to retire. In general, this generation is well educated, more financially secure and able to live where they desire in retirement. The current economic recession has destroyed an estimated \$3 trillion of household wealth. For many retirees and those approaching retirement, nest eggs have taken a real beating. The Baby Boomers will still retire, but they are now forced to make some hard choices. These retirees are likely to make two fundamental choices. First, they will scale down their retirement plans and, in that context, rural communities are likely to be more attractive (from a cost value standpoint). Second, they will likely need to work during retirement.

For your rural community, the implications are significant. You will have more opportunity to attract retirees if you make them aware of what you have to offer by way of affordable quality of life. Because more retirees will continue to work in their retirement, entrepreneurship becomes important in two very relevant ways. First, the retirees will bring talent and entrepreneurial skills with them that can help grow your business community. Second, for those that take over or start new businesses, they will create employment opportunities for others, including those retirees who want just a job and not a business.

There is also a third possible implication we are studying. Confidence in our financial markets has been shaken to their core. Every American with wealth has been impacted by the financial meltdown and mismanagement of the 2007-2009 economic crisis. This experience is driving investors to place their money where it is safer and will generate a reasonable return. They may be willing to accept lower returns in exchange for more stable and accountable performance. For those retirees in your community or moving to your community, they may be more open to investing in local entrepreneurial ventures. Capital for growing a new generation of ventures may become more available if your community is prepared to take advantage of this emerging trend.

Retirees People Attraction Guide

As part of our series of Guides on People Attraction, we have developed a specific guide that focuses on retirees. You may want to obtain this Guide and use it as you craft your community's game plan around entrepreneurs who are retirees.

America is on the edge of a profound change. An estimated 78 million Baby Boom Generation adults are entering retirement. The oldest are now retiring and the youngest of this generation will begin retiring over the next twenty years. This generation is one of the most active, healthy and wealthy in American history.

Many retirees, either because of a desire to keep working or a need to earn supplemental income, will become business investors, owners or operators. A key entrepreneur attraction opportunity lies in America's retirees.

So who are these retirees that also have strong possible entrepreneurial orientations?

In many cases their profiles includes the following characteristics:

- Generally they have business experience, talents and skills.
- In some case they have been entrepreneurs and business owners and/or operators in other communities.
- They have time and want to engage (at least on a flexible and part-time basis) in business activity.
- Because of personal financial conditions, they need to continue making an income.
- They may not want to work too much, but are interested in investing in entrepreneurial ventures that will create a solid return on their investment. As a hedge against loss, they may be willing to mentor those running the businesses in which they invest.

Is this new retiree who has just recently moved into your community an entrepreneur? Do not spend too much time trying to figure this one out. Chris Gibbons of Colorado who has worked with thousands of entrepreneurs over the past 25 years finally gave up trying to answer this question. Chris now counsels that you should just ask them if they are entrepreneurs. Also, Chris suggests that if you take time to explore their preferences, they will give you a pretty good idea of their background and what entrepreneurial options they might consider. There are a number of amenities that retirees require and would prefer when they are considering a community. We encourage you to review our Retirees Guide for more information on these items. But we do want to highlight some of the business or entrepreneur related amenities that are particularly important to the retiree entrepreneur. Figure 7 summarizes our short list of desired amenities.

2008 Victims

Two major trends collided in 2008 that have profound implications for the future. The first trend was well anticipated and in progress – the beginning waves of Baby Boomer retirees. The second trend caught most off-guard with devastating results – the 2008 economic recession. With the start of the new century, approximately 78 million Baby Boomers began retiring in the United States. Many were counting on early retirement rooted in stock market and real estate wealth. The financial and real estate crises of 2007 has now become America’s deepest economic recession since the Great Depression. Trillions of dollars of wealth have been lost along with consumer confidence. For many retirees who are impacted by this recession, they may be looking for both lower cost places to live with business opportunities to supplement diminished retirement incomes.

Figure 7 –Retirees Amenities

Business Opportunities	Same song, somewhat different verse – be sure to have a list of possible businesses available for sale or lease when your prospects make inquiry. Also be sure to develop a list of possible businesses needed in your area.
Investment Opportunities	In the case of retirees with some wealth, the entrepreneurial option may not be going into business but investing in a business. Do a little preparation and confidentially identify possible investment opportunities and how newcomers can connect with possible deals.
Fitting In	We all want our communities to prosper and grow. But sometimes new people are a bit disruptive with their new ideas and ways of doing things. Make sure you are ready to accept new members to your business community. Entrepreneurs who are seniors will have their own strong ideas on how to do things.
Networked Infrastructure	Experienced entrepreneurs are used to networking their way to solutions. Be ready to help your new senior entrepreneurs find the answers they need to get going. Anticipate what kinds of questions they will have by talking to those you already have attracted to your community. Identify the resources and individuals that can help and facilitate contact.
Peers	Take a bit of time to bring folks together into informal peer groups. Provide opportunities for people to meet each other. Peer groups of new entrepreneurs can be very supportive of each other as they settle into both a new community and a new venture.



Keys to Success

In review, current thinking suggests there are three pillars essential for effectively engaging in entrepreneur attraction:

Quality of Life Assets
An Entrepreneurial Business Climate
Adequate Business Infrastructure

We will not go into considerable detail on each of these pillars at this time, but it is helpful to build them out a bit more.

Quality of Life Assets. By recognizing that talented people have choices as to where they live and understanding that there is considerable diversity in the kinds of communities people are seeking, the definition of quality of life will vary in this mobile creative class. Rural communities should not seek to fundamentally become something they are not. If someone is seeking the high energy life of New York City, accept and celebrate their choice. Don't fight it. Rather, rural communities should focus on those who are seeking a "rural lifestyle." Build on inherent assets and qualities. But recognize that rural communities may lack some essential ingredients.

An Entrepreneurial Business Climate. Every community has the potential to build a basic entrepreneurial business climate. If communities are willing to work regionally, they can develop high performing entrepreneurial business climates. The most important attributes of a strong business climate are entrepreneurs and effective ways for them to network with each other. Consider including entrepreneur attraction as part of a business coaching program.

Adequate Business Infrastructure. Most rural communities that were and are effective with business attraction probably have adequate business infrastructure for most entrepreneurs. However, as we move from a products-based economy to a knowledge economy there will be greater need for educated workers, telecommunications and work place environments and less need for industrial support infrastructure such as rail service, power and semi-skilled workers.

Available Resources

Likely available resources in your area include the following:

Cooperative Extension Service
 Regional Development Organizations
 Small Business Development Centers
 State Development Agencies
 U.S.D.A. Rural Development
 Regional Universities or Colleges
 Community Colleges
 Resource Conservation & Development
 Areas
 Public Utilities
 Regional Councils of Governments

Most communities that were and are effective with traditional business attraction have more of the right stuff to engage in entrepreneur attraction. There are critical differences that are important to create a competitive edge. Strong assessment and realistic redress of these infrastructure needs will be critical in gaining a beach head and sustaining advantage over time.

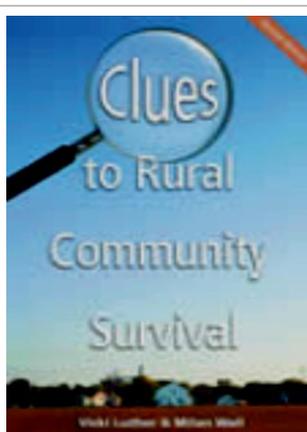
Building Your Community's Game Plan

Your People Attraction game plan should be firmly rooted in three foundational considerations:

1. Your Unique *Opportunities* for Attraction
2. Your Attraction *Assets*
3. Your Community's *Preferences* for Attraction

Let's explore each of the game plan building considerations a bit more before we map out a framework and process for moving forward.

Opportunities. Within our People Attraction Guides, we have identified 25 specific groups that can be candidates for attraction to your community. These possibilities run from your own kids coming home and making their future in their hometown to recruiting a new doctor to your community's clinic or hospital. There are entrepreneurs, different kinds of retirees and families of various stripes. It is important that you focus on those groups where your community has real opportunity for meaningful attraction.



The Heartland Center for Leadership Development has a wonderful resource that every community should have in its library. This book is full of very helpful tips on how to engage in development more effectively. You can order this book through www.heartlandcenter.info.

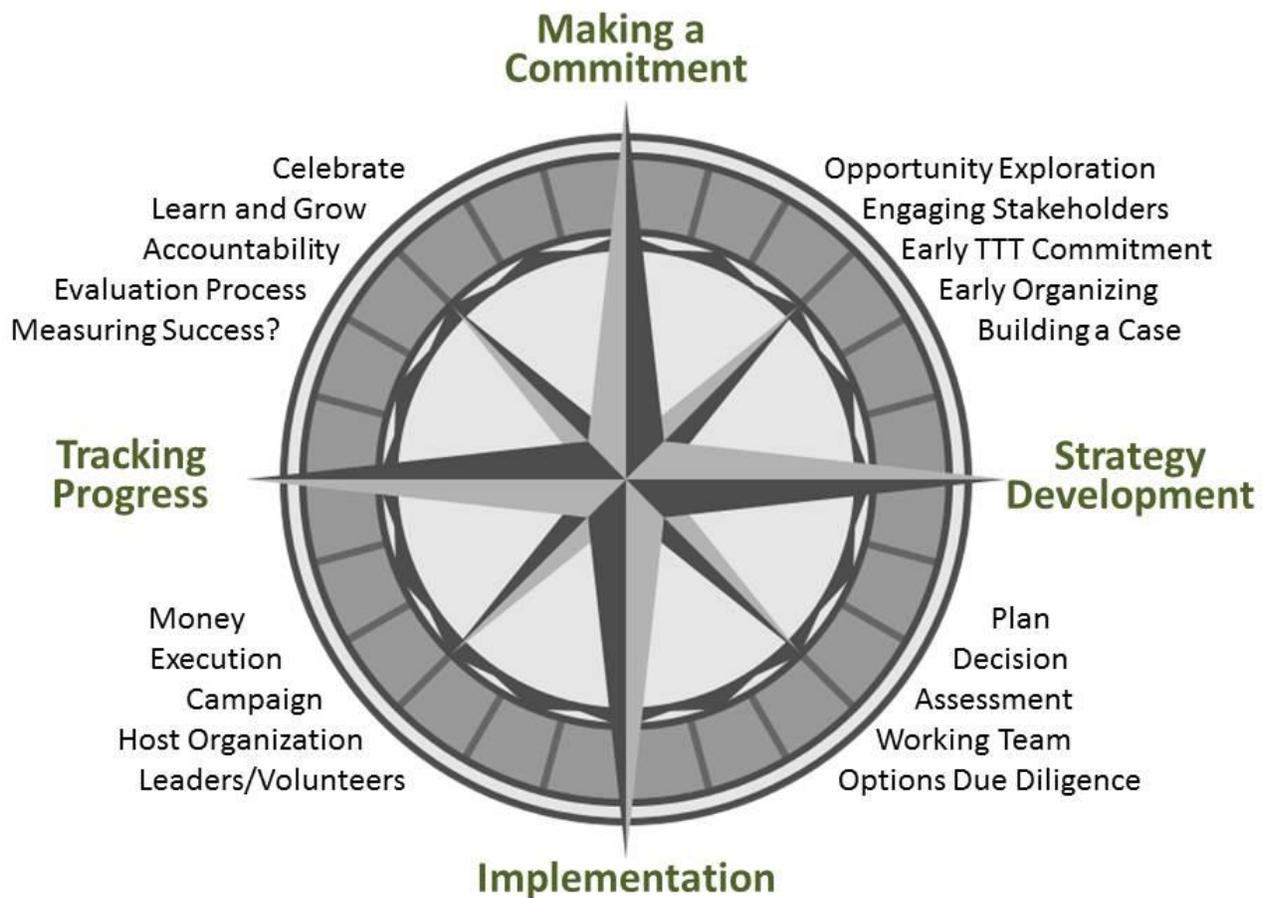
Assets. With a good idea of your best opportunities for attraction, you can now focus on what assets you have to work with. Assets are the resources, amenities and quality of life and work characteristics important to those you are trying to attract. In many cases, you will decide where your best opportunities are based on your strengths or assets. Always remember your assets are the building blocks of competing for the hearts and minds of those considering your community to become their hometown.

Preferences. Finally, your community is likely to have some preferences. You may have all the right stuff for attracting early retirees. You may actually focus some time and energy on this attraction opportunity. But your community really wants to ensure your school's future. In this case, your community preference may drive more resources toward attracting families with children and younger adults. Always know that where there is passion among your community's residents, there is also strong rationale for action.

With these three considerations as a foundation for building your community's people attraction game plan, let's layout a plan building framework and process.

Figure 9 provides a visual presentation of the key elements essential to good plan building. In this case we are talking about a plan that enables and guides action and gets results.

Figure 9 – Building a Game Plan



Development is not linear, clear or often logical. There are always unforeseen challenges and new opportunities. It is important to be entrepreneurial focusing on your desired outcome, but willing to change course when it makes sense to do so. So view our framework and process as a road map – a road map with many routes to the same destinations. Only you and your community can determine which route will work best for you.

Now let's turn our attention to the first cornerstone of our plan building framework – Making a Commitment.

Making a Commitment

Too often, development is like a boat drifting on a lake. You will get somewhere eventually, but it may not make your community stronger or better. It is important to be thoughtful, strategic and very intentional with respect to what you want to accomplish with development. Making a commitment that is real and deep is the keystone to long-term success. We offer five process steps within Making a Commitment:

- Early Organizing
- Opportunity Exploration
- Building a Case
- Engaging Stakeholders
- Early TTT Commitments

Let's look at each of these action steps in turn.

Early Organizing. You have to start somewhere and chances are good that you and some other folks have decided this is something important to do within your community. Think a bit about others in your community who might care about your proposed people attraction strategy and invite them to coffee and talk it through. See if you can form an informal group to work through the next action steps together.

Opportunity Exploration. Generally the next step is to spend some time exploring your specific opportunities. You might want to use our three considerations outlined in the start of Section 4 as a guide for exploring your community's people attraction opportunities. You may want to do a little research as you sort this question out and gain focus on which opportunities make the strongest case.

Building a Case. You may decide with your informal group to move forward on your own and see what you can make happen. However, it is likely that you will want some community support. So that means you need to build a good case that you can make to those you hope will become involved and supportive. Your case for moving forward need not be complicated. It is more a matter of organizing your points and making sure you have some reasonable answers to the likely questions that might arise. Do not worry about getting it all right initially. The community will ultimately help you get your case refined.

Engaging Stakeholders. As you are building your case think about the key stakeholder groups in your community that might have a vested interest in what you are doing. If your passion is to attract young people back home, chances are good that your school, health care and churches might be really



interested. With more young people come babies, students and kids in Sunday school. Give some thought to why these groups should care and that will really help you build a great list and refine your case for action.

Early TTT Commitments. Okay what is “TTT?” TTT stands for “time, talent and treasure (money)”. Anything worth doing that is likely to have a meaningful impact requires the three Ts. Early on you will need some time commitments, some human talent and probably a little cash. As you move forward, you will need more of all three.

You have reached the point where your community (or at least a segment of it) has made a commitment to move forward. So what comes next?

Strategy Development

Working smart is so important today. It is particularly important for smaller rural communities. At any given time you have lots to do and only so much time, talent and treasure. Making a bit larger investment on the front end to build a really strong strategy will pay lots of dividends on the back end when you really are struggling to find the leaders, volunteers, ideas and money to keep your strategy going forward. At this stage in building your community’s people attraction game plan we offer the following action steps:

- Build a More Formal Working Group
- Do Deeper Assessment
- Undertake Due Diligence on Possible Strategy Options
- Make an Informed Decision
- Finalize Your Plan of Action

Let’s map out these action steps in more detail next.

Working Group. Grow your informal group to a more formal and recognized working group. At this stage, the mission of this working group is to build the plan and then transition into action. It is important that folks are given the option to commit for specific tasks and then let others assume next stage tasks. Your working group should include representatives from all your committed stakeholders.

Assessment. As a middle school student is likely to question, “Why is there always more homework?” Building a strong strategy or game plan requires more homework and critical thinking. We have resources that can help you map out your particular assessment needs to guide this part of the work.



Options Due Diligence. Related to assessment is the task of doing due diligence on specific strategy options. For example, if your mission is to attract skilled trades (e.g., electricians, plumbers) to your community, there are an associated set of options you can adopt in building your plan. You may want to offer incentives or low interest money for buying a building. It is important to work through all your options, evaluate their likely effectiveness and probable costs.

Informed Decision. Once you have done your homework and completed your due diligence on options, make some decisions. Enable your working group to set some priorities and adopt some strategy options based on your work to date. Be sure to celebrate your decisions and get ready to move to the next step.

Plan of Action. Once you have decided what your strategy options will be, you can nail down the details. We urge you to not over-complicate this step, but set your goals, be clear on what action steps are needed, establish a time line with target dates and be sure you have two budgets – one for needed money and the second for your human resources.

Congratulations! You now have a clear and strong plan of action. We are now ready to move to implementation.

Implementation

All the work your community has done to date is to get to this point – moving to action. We have identified five action steps that move you from a plan to impact:

- Doing a Campaign
- Expanding Leaders & Volunteers
- Raising Money
- Finding a Host Organization
- Executing the Plan

Doing a Campaign. Most of us do not like politics, but one gift from the political world is the idea of a “campaign.” The nice thing about campaigns is they have a clear outcome, start and end, and lots of focus. Consider adopting a “campaign approach” as you move to action.

Expanding Leaders & Volunteers. Now that you have a plan, you have a much clearer idea of the kinds of human resources required. Divide and conquer. Ask many people to make small contributions leveraging your core team’s commitment of vision, planning and engagement. Again, political



Center for Rural Entrepreneurship

campaigns are masters at this. So think about whom in your community is really good at designing and running campaigns – they can help you figure out this piece.

Raising Money. Your plan also gives you a really good idea of what kinds of money you need. Consider both cash and in-kind approaches to raising the money you need to make your plan happen. For example, you need some printing done. You can get a donation to pay to have it done or maybe one of your businesses with a good photocopier can do the job for you.

Finding a Host Organization. With people attraction, you are looking at a long-term game plan. It would be a good idea to think about finding a host organization that is willing to take this initiative on long-term. Short-term projects can be organic and informal. But long-term projects geared to major impact need more structure and often part of this answer is an established host organization like the city, school, chamber or development corporation. If you have your stakeholder groups well engaged, figuring out which organization would be your best choice for hosting your initiative will become clear in time.

Thoughts on Assessment

Chances are good you have already done some assessment since you have determined that entrepreneur attraction is a priority. Before you get too deep into strategy building, a bit more assessment is a good idea. This step can help your community really sort out your options and determine your trade-offs. Finding the right fit that makes the most sense for your community is really important to initial and long-term success. We would suggest the following assessment activities:

Engage Your Target – If your goal is to attract young adults back to your community, take time to engage those you are targeting. Get them involved and take time to learn from them. They have great insight that can help you build a better plan. Their involvement can really energize your efforts.

Visit Other Communities – Check around and see if other communities in your region have a related strategy. Make some assignments, do some web research and make some phone calls to learn more. If you find a couple of communities with strategies that look good, load up the car with some folks and make a visit. This kind of research can really pay dividends in building a better plan.

Inventory Your Assets – If your community is like most other rural communities, you do not have a ready supply of money, people and knowledge in support of your efforts. But your community does have valuable assets that can enable your plan to take life and get going. Have a working session and map out possible assets that can be connected to resource your game plan. Be creative and innovative – for example, engage your area’s real estate agency. They along with your banks might really be interested in such a strategy. Why? Young adults need housing and the services of real estate folks and bankers. Map out your possible resources and recruit help as needed.

Line Up Those Who Can Help – Reach beyond your community and explore what kind of resources might be out there that can help you. Often, organizations like Cooperative Extension, state development agencies, area colleges and universities, regional development organizations, etc. have expertise and capacity to assist you. Also, do not miss resources right at home. You have organizations like your school and hospital that have to recruit workers from time to time. They have associations that have expertise that can sometimes be really valuable.

See if Funding is Available – Sooner or later you will need some cash to fuel your game plan. It is never too soon to begin to identify and explore possible funding sources. Begin local and then investigate external resources. On the local front, check out the likely suspects – chamber, development corporation, local utilities, main street, banks, health care and anyone else that might have a self-interest in youth attraction. For possible external resources, if your community is part of a regional council of governments or area development agency, chances are good they have a grant writer who can do some research on possible foundation, federal and state resources that might be a good fit.

Executing the Plan. One of our favorite entrepreneurs is known to say that there are two keys to success. First, make sure you have a good plan. Second, work really hard to executive your plan well. We agree whole heartedly! There is a lot of work getting to this point but the real work begins now. Make sure you have new blood that is ready to run with the plan you have created.

Searching, dreaming, assessing, planning and organizing are now behind you. You have a plan and you are implementing it. You are making real progress and the next phase focuses on staying on the right track and sustaining your effort.

Tracking Progress

Even the best plans well executed will need to be adjusted. Our world is not static. We guarantee and you know from hard earned experience that there will be curves in the road, new opportunities will emerge and adjusting your plan is important. But as is the case with driving a car, do not over steer! We have identified five additional action steps that will take your game plan to impact:

- What is Success?
- Evaluating for Progress
- Accountability
- Learning & Growing
- Celebrating Progress

What is Success? Americans love to keep score. We track everything and take joy in knowing how we are measuring up. Use this cultural trait to its advantage. Be sure you have some idea of what success looks like. We suggest you employ a wonderful performance system developed by Milan Wall at the Heartland Center for Leadership Development called the **Hierarchy of Community Impacts**. We will even share a free copy of the Hierarchy so you can get started with defining success for your initiative.

Evaluating for Progress. With success defined, you can track your progress. We Americans can really be patient and work hard if we believe we are making progress. Every quarter take a few minutes to measure your progress against your vision of success. Even modest progress will provide energy and encourage your team and community to stay the course. Conversely, if you are off track, this exercise will enable you to refocus, set new goals and get moving again.

Accountability. Often even the best projects, programs or initiatives get lost in the fog of unaccountability. In fact , we are pros at leaving things kind of vague. This habit is a death sentence to your work. For example, we decide to take a certain action, but we are unclear as to WHO is responsible. A month later we meet again and discover that no progress has been realized. Of course



Center for Rural Entrepreneurship

no progress is realized because of the fog of unaccountability. Be honest with what is possible, but then create a culture of accountability to each other so that the work agreed to gets done.

Learning & Growing. Sometimes we are so busy doing the work that we fail to slow down and take stock of how we are doing. This process of defining success, tracking progress and holding each other accountable can help your team and initiative learn and grow. Taking time to do a “no fault autopsy” of something that did not work can provide invaluable insight into what you need to do to progress the next time. Failure is part of progress and getting your community more comfortable with this reality will empower you to do more.

Celebrating Progress. This should not be all work. Developing our hometowns and accomplishing important work should be rewarding and can be fun. There is a reason that after a baptism, graduation or other major event we have food and celebrate. Be sure to create times when you can celebrate and thank those who have labored to make your community better.

We hope this information is helpful to you and your community as you begin to build your people attraction strategy. The final section in this Guide provides some important information on how we can help you realize your dreams.

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The Center for Rural Entrepreneurship's mission is to help community leaders build a prosperous future by supporting and empowering business, social and civic entrepreneurs. With our roots and hearts in rural America, we help communities of all sizes and interests by bringing *empowering research* together with *effective community engagement* to advance *community-driven strategies* for prosperity.

Our **Solution Area Teams** empower community leaders to find their own answers to the economic development challenges and opportunities they face:

- **Community Development Philanthropy** provides effective strategies to build local philanthropic capacity and generate development resources.
- **New Generation Partnerships** provides a framework for engaging young people now and attracting them in the future.
- **Entrepreneurial Communities** provides a roadmap for designing and delivering entrepreneurship strategies that work.

For tools and resources, visit the departments in e2 University at <http://www.energizingentrepreneurs.org/library/e2university.html>.

To learn more about the Center, go to www.energizingentrepreneurs.org.

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