

Leadership Development and Civic Engagement

Leadership strategies are important because in many distressed rural areas, there is no widely shared vision for the community, and power is held by a narrow group. Civic alignment – shared commitment among key stakeholders to improving the quality of life for the whole community – is often weak or absent. By preparing new people for leadership roles, introducing new ideas about economic development, and initiating a broad-based dialogue on the region's future, colleges can bring about alignment in their communities and help create a foundation for equitable economic development.

RCCI TOOLKIT AND VIDEO/PRINT RESOURCES

- **Video 1 – RCCI Philosophy: Community Colleges as Catalysts for Rural Development** in Strategies for Rural Development and Increased Access to Education: A Toolkit for Rural Community Colleges – a concise overview of the RCCI with commentary on the rationale for engaging a diverse planning team that represents all voices in the community.
- **Video 2 and workbook titled, Moving from Vision to Action: A Planning Guide for the Rural Community College Initiative** in Strategies for Rural Development and Increased Access to Education: A Toolkit for Rural Community Colleges – a training video and workbook for using Moving from Vision to Action, a step-by-step planning and community engagement process for community and institutional change. The steps result in a concrete plan of action, but the process is as important as the product since it encourages conversations and learning by a diverse group of community and college representatives as they play leadership roles in their community.
- **Video 3A, 3B, 3C – Building Effective Teams** in Strategies for Rural Development and Increased Access to Education: A Toolkit for Rural Community Colleges – provide guidance on how to identify, recruit, and develop a dynamic, motivated team, drawing on the experiences of presidents, team leaders, and team members from several RCCI sites.
- **Effective Practices for Small and Rural Institutions** – video/print package documenting practices developed by RCCI colleges

Highlighted colleges and programs include:

- o Southeast Community College's (KY) RCCI planning and implementation team
 - o NMSU—Carlsbad's Community Day
 - o Meridian Community College's Leadership Lauderdale
 - o Mountain Empire Community College's Coalfield Water Fund
- **Vision Carlsbad: Community Day** – video documenting the strategies Carlsbad used to engage over 10 percent of their population in developing and prioritizing development goals for the community.

- **RCCI: Planting the Seeds of Change** –videos and companion guidebooks. The first set, *Planting the Seeds of Change*, describes the central principles of the RCCI and the resulting collaborative process and change efforts at Meridian Community College (MS) and Sitting Bull College (ND). Viewers watch how change happened over time in these two very different RCCI communities. Those considering undertaking a community development initiative will gain an understanding of the complex nature of this work and the personal commitment it entails. The second set, *Leadership for Change*, emphasizes the multiple levels of competencies community leaders need to undertake effective community change efforts, and explores RCCI methods and strategies for addressing those multiple-level needs.
- **Moving Mountains Economic Summit** – videotape of national teleconference, held November 19, 1999 on the Mountain Empire Community College campus in Big Stone Gap, VA; stories of community renewal in Chattanooga, TN, Upper Peninsula, MI, and Tupelo, MS are presented to stimulate thinking about how to approach regional development. The videotape is accompanied by a booklet describing ways RCCI sites have organized regional summits and tips on how to replicate their models. A companion videotape of historian Ron Eller's presentation provides historical context for why the Appalachian coal mining region is distressed.
- **Stimulating Rural Economies: An Innovative Case Competition Model** – this package highlights an economic development Case Competition held at Southwest Texas Junior College, Uvalde, TX on March 28, 1998. This was the first-ever Case Competition hosted by a community college and the first ever on developing a regional economy. Print material provides tips on setting up similar competitions.
- **Economic Development in Indian Country.** This package covers a seminar for tribal colleges held in Albuquerque, NM, on September 24-26, 1999. Key topics include how the reservation economy works and the critical relationship between nation building and economic development. The package includes two videos, featuring presenters Perry Horse of MDC, Inc., Gerald Sherman of Four Times Foundation, Sherry Salway Black of First Nations Development Institute, and Stephen Cornell of the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development. Materials are equally suitable for use in credit-bearing seminars or community meetings in which the goal is to deepen understanding of effective ways to approach economic development in tribal areas.
- **Rural Colleges as Catalysts for Community Change: The RCCI Experience** – published in the USDA journal *Rural America*, this article promotes community colleges as effective institutions in rural development efforts, including leadership development and facilitating regional dialogue on the region's future. Online at <http://ers.usda.gov/publications/ruralamerica/ra162/>

- **American Association of Community Colleges Project Brief: RCCI III – Building Teams for Institutional and Community Change** – reports on effective approaches to team building in the RCCI.
- **The Promise of the RCCI** – videotape of presentation on rural development challenges, delivered at the East Glacier (Montana) RCCI Institute on September 15, 1997, by Karl Stauber, President of the Northwest Area Foundation, and formerly with the United States Department of Agriculture