Stronger Economies Together

Strategies for Building New Economic Opportunities

Module Six: Exploring Strategies for Enhancing the Regional Economy

Alison F. Davis, University of Kentucky
Michael Wilcox, University of Tennessee

Module Six: Exploring Strategies for Enhancing the Regional Economy

Module Six will examine specific strategies that might be used to advance the economy of your region, with a specific focus on strengthening the regional clusters the team has identified.

Using the *Participants' Guide*

The *Participants' Guide* contains handouts designed to assist participants in planning their economic development effort.

Group Exercises

The group exercises in this session will help the participants understand the materials, provide a break from listening to presenter and allow the participants to get to know each other.

References:

Web links
BEA-REIS Data
http://www.bea.gov/regional

Bureau of Economic Analysis
http://www.bea.gov/regional

Business Retention & Expansion International
http://www.brei.org

California Department of Food and Agriculture
http://www.cdfa.ca.gov

Cashing in on Business Opportunities
http://srdc.msstate.edu/cashing/

Center for Rural Entrepreneurship
http://www.energizingentrepreneurs.org

Dun and Bradstreet
http://www.dnb.com/

Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (EMSI)
http://www.economicmodeling.com

ESRI Business Information Solutions
http://www.esri.com/products/index.html

EXCEL Management Systems, Inc.
County Business Pattern Data & IMPLAN Data
http://www.emsi.com

FASTTRAC entrepreneur training, Kauffman Foundation
http://fasttrac.org/

HandMade in America
http://handmadeinamerica.org

IMPLAN Economic Modeling
http://implan.com/V4/Index.php

U.S. Census – County Business Patterns
http://www.census.gov/econ/cbp/

U.S. Census – Non-employer Statistics
http://www.census.gov/econ/sbo

U.S. Census – North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)
http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/

University of Wisconsin Extension
http://www.uwex.edu

UWEX Center for Community Economic Development
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced

Woods and Poole Economics
http://www.woodsandpoole.com/main.php?cat=metro

Text
Barta, S., Frye, J., Nelson, J., Paterson, S., Ralstin, S., Wittman, P., Woods, M. (2010). C.A.R.E. Model. *Southern Rural Development Center.* Retrieved from http://srdc.msstate.edu/care/

Cox, L.J., et al. (2009). The community business matching model. In S. Goetz, et al. (Ed.), *Targeting Regional Economic Development*, (pp. 255-278). New York, NY: Routledge. ISBN 0-203- 88349-7.

Davis Reum, A., & Harris, T. (2006). Exploring firm location beyond simple growth models: A double hurdle application. *The Journal of Regional Analysis & Policy. 36*(1). pp. 45-67. Retrieved from http://www.jrap-journal.org/pastvolumes/2000/v36/F36-1-4.pdf

Goetz, S.J., Deller, S.C. & Harris, T.R. (2007). *Targeting regional economic development*. New York, NY: Routledge. ISBN 0-203- 88349-7.

Luecke, R. & Katz, R. (2003). *Managing Creativity and Innovation*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press. ISBN 1-59139-112-1.

Reynolds, P. D., Carter, N.M., Gartner, W.B., & Greene, P.G. (2004). The prevalence of nascent entrepreneurs in the United States; Evidence from the panel study of entrepreneurial dynamics. *Small Business Economics, 23*. pp. 263-264. Retrieved from http://ehis.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=aa14a383-953f-4639-8267-63db6b16c713%40sessionmgr13&vid=3&hid=5

Rural Policy Research Institute. (2011). *Energizing entrepreneurship; Community readiness factors*. Retrieved from http://www.energizingentrepreneurs.org/site/images/research/tp/et/et5.pdf

Exploring Strategies for Enhancing the Regional Economy

Module Six

Have this slide showing when participants arrive. Now that the regional team has explored the clusters in the region, this module moves them to examining economic development strategies that might be useful for strengthening a regional cluster.

NOTE: Prior to the presentation of this Module, the regional team should have selected a small number of industry clusters from the list provided in Module Five for further exploration. These more specialized reports are provided by the Southern Rural Development Center. Please give two week's advance notice of industry report needs.

Slide: 1

Time: 1 Minute

Script:

"Welcome to Module Six: Exploring Strategies for Enhancing the Regional Economy. This session will examine specific strategies that might be used to advance the economy of your region, with a specific focus on strengthening the regional cluster(s) the team has identified."

If the group had homework from the previous session, review the group's accomplishments. In addition, clarify any questions from the previous session. Review any questions or follow up from the discussions of regional clusters as the data from that session form the foundation for this one.

Reflecting on the Previous Session

- What did you find most useful or valuable?
- What progress have you made since then?
- Any questions or clarification needed?

Script:

Slide: 2

Time: 5 Minutes

Handouts: It may be helpful to have a few extra copies of any cluster data shared from Module Five as a reference.

"Hopefully, you've had time to digest the data for your region that was shared with you in Module Five. What are your observations now that you have had time to think about this information? What are the most useful elements of the previous session? Have you made any progress on your team assignments since the last time we met? Any questions, comments or concerns before we proceed to this session?"

This module is the "so what" of Module Five, in which the team explored possible clusters in the region. As homework, the team was to identify particular clusters that appeared to have potential for growth. Having the data from that session in hand will help as the regional team considers potential options. This module will look at possible strategies to strengthen these clusters based on the concept of import substitution.

Overview of Module Six

- Identify the economic leaks in the region
- Explore basic avenues for strengthening clusters
- Provide an overview of some specific strategies within each avenue
- Select some potential directions for the region to explore

Slide: 3

Time: 2 Minutes

"This module is organized under four main topics. First, we will identify the economic leaks that may need to be addressed. Then, we will explore four basic avenues for strengthening regional clusters. In essence, what does a region need to do to gain or strengthen its competitive advantage in a particular industry?

We will also examine several potential strategies within each avenue that may have potential for enhancing your region's clusters. Finally, we will begin to hone in on some specific strategies that have the potential for being effective in enhancing this region's identified cluster(s).

The data on clusters that we considered during the previous session and that we will explore further during this session serve as a foundation and catalyst for strategically thinking about opportunities the regional team can explore. However, the knowledge and experience of each of you will be vital in determining the best course of action for the future."

This slide was introduced in Module Five and becomes a link for furthering the discussion of economic leakages.

"You may remember our discussion of the 'leaky bucket' during Module Five. As a quick review, think of the regional economy as a bucket. Money flows in and out of a regional economy (the bucket) based on goods and services that businesses and people buy and sell. When money leaves the region because goods or services were purchased from outside either by people or by businesses, this constitutes a leak in the regional economic bucket. What are some examples of leaks (i.e. goods/services not available locally) in this region?" [Allow for a short discussion.]

Slide: 4

Time: 5 Minutes

This slide continues to expand on the concept of import substitution.

"One way to plug a leak in the local economy is to connect regional demand for goods and services with the regional suppliers of those goods and services. Many things that individuals or businesses need can be found from suppliers within the region, but due perhaps to lack of adequate information or connections, those things may be purchased outside the region. By substituting demand for externally produced goods with regionally produced goods, regions can retain capital for use within the community. This is import substitution."

Slide: 5

Time: 1 Minute

This slide outlines the basic steps in the process of strengthening the regional cluster through import substitution.

Strengthening Clusters through Import Substitution

Identify:
- Industries that support the cluster
- Goods and services being purchased from outside the region
- Capacity for supplying these inputs regionally
- Resources needed to help promote the creation, expansion, retention or attraction of businesses to supply inputs

"How can we strengthen our cluster by focusing on import substitution? The steps in this process are outlined on this slide. First, we must identify the industries that support the cluster. Next, we look at what is being purchased from outside the region. Exploring the regional capacity for supplying these imports is the next step. Finally, we consider the resources (personnel, raw materials, infrastructure, etc.) that will help promote the creation, expansion, retention or attraction of businesses to create these goods and services within the region that have been previously imported."

Slide: 6

Time: 2 Minute

This slide provides an example of import substitution through an exploration of the wine industry.

Slide: 7

Time: 6 Minutes

"Let's imagine that we have a potential wine cluster in the region. By mapping the inputs used in making wine, we can see the potential for the cluster. For ease of discussion, let's assume there are only six items used in the production of wine: grapes, irrigation systems, fertilizer, advertising, research, and labels. Each box on the slide represents the amount of the input, with larger boxes suggesting larger dollar value of inputs needed to produce wine. The color of the box tells the percentage of the needed input that is currently available in the region. For example, 100 percent of the grapes currently needed to produce wine are available regionally. On the other hand, only a small percentage of labels are currently available regionally. Currently, the region has no manufacturers of irrigation systems or regional advertisers. Just by glancing at this illustration, what might be the easiest leak to plug using the existing resources in the region? [Allow for discussion.]

As a result of this process, we can examine the potential growth of each of these input industries and the associated job skills needed to support them. In addition, the region must decide if these are the types of industries and jobs deemed desirable for the area. It is possible something like coal mining might be quite lucrative since coal energy serves as an input into nearly every good produced. However, the region might decide that mining is not an industry it wants to see expanded in the area."

At the close of the previous module, the regional team selected a few industries to explore in depth. Choose one of these industries and replace the sample chart shown on this slide with that regional data. Also, add the name of the industry to the title.

At this point, hand out the detailed industry data and begin a discussion of where leakages are occurring. Discussion points should include where the largest amount of dollars are leaking. The following section will begin guiding thoughts toward potential strategies for stopping the leaks.
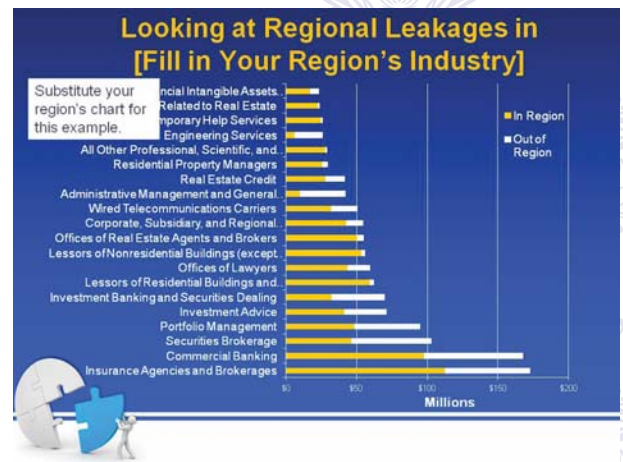
Slide: 8

Time: 7 Minutes

Handout: Detailed industrial report that matches the one on the slide.

Script:

"At the close of Module Five, this regional team identified [number of industries] that you wanted to explore in greater detail. This slide shows some of that information for [industry].

[Hand out the data for this industry to help facilitate the discussion. Do not hand out all the reports yet (if you have more than one to share). That will come after this opening discussion to help participants interpret the data.]

The chart shows exactly where the leakages within this industry are occurring. Several different aspects of this information deserve our attention. First, looking at overall expenditures (total length of the bar) within a category gives us a sense of scale within that industry while looking at the amount of money leaking from the region (white part of the bar) tells us where we may have greater opportunities to strengthen the cluster regionally. Also of importance is looking at the specific goods or services where the leakages are occurring. The region can then begin to think about whether the ability to fill those demands already exists within the region or would need to be created or attracted to fill that need. All of this is guided by what may be attainable by and relevant to the region. (Remember S.M.A.R.T.!)"

[Once you feel confident that participants understand how to interpret the chart, move to the next slide for small group work.]

Now that the groundwork has been laid, divide the group into smaller teams to examine the data in more detail. If you have more than one industry report to examine, you may want to ask different groups to look at different reports. Ask participants to consider the bullets on the slide: (1) where leakages are occurring, (2) where the region may already have the capacity to respond (i.e. businesses already exist within the region that could provide the needed goods/ services, and (3) where potential growth opportunities may exist, either in growing existing businesses, creating new, or recruiting from outside to help fill the gaps. Give each group time to report back to the larger group. Note that the groups do not have to identify specific strategies at this point, as you will be exploring that over the next section. Rather, ask them to look for key points within each industry on which they may want to develop strategies to address.

Examining Your Region's Cluster

Identify where:
- Leakages are occurring
- The regional may already have capacity to respond
- Potential growth opportunities exist

Slide: 9

Time: 20 Minutes

Script:

"Let's take time now to examine the details for the clusters we requested. The points outlined on this slide can guide the group in identifying areas where focused regional strategies may foster growth within the cluster(s). In small groups, consider:
- Where leakages within the cluster are occurring
- What exists within the region that may already be able to meet the demand for the associated products or services being imported from outside
- What arenas may provide potential growth opportunities for launching new enterprises, expanding existing, or strategically recruiting from outside

[Stop to allow for small group discussion on these elements. Once these steps have been explored, provide time for each group to report back.]

These insights will be helpful as we devote time over the next few slides to develop a deeper understanding of strategies that may be useful in responding to what you have discovered."
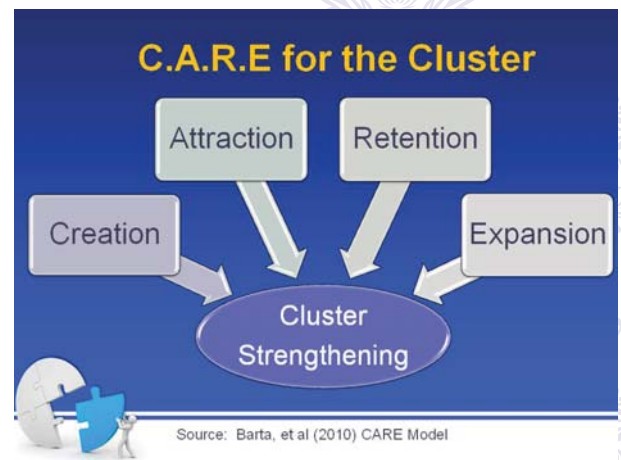
This slide introduces the four avenues of cluster enhancement, each aimed at stopping leakages in specific ways. These avenues are drawn from the C.A.R.E. Model (full reference below), an on-line resource that goes through each of these in more detail.

C.A.R.E for the Cluster

Source: Barta, et al (2010) CARE Model

Slide: 10

Time: 1 Minute

Source: Barta, S., Frye, J., Nelson, J., Paterson, S., Ralstin, S., Wittman, P., & Woods, M. (2010). C.A.R.E. Model. *Southern Rural Development Center.* Retrieved from http://srdc.msstate.edu/care/

"In the newly revised C.A.R.E. model developed by a team of community development specialists, four avenues are described to help build and enhance an existing or emerging cluster. Each avenue has the potential of stopping leakages that are occurring or threatening to occur. These are:

•   Creation of new firms from within the region
•   Attraction or recruitment of firms from outside the region
•   Retention of existing firms that contribute to the cluster
•   Expansion of existing firms to increase the regional capacity of the cluster

We will take a deeper look at each of these."

This slide introduces a discussion of business creation as an avenue for stopping cluster leakages. The concept of creation involves growing new enterprises locally to fill the gaps of goods or services that are not currently available locally. A focus on strategies for enhancing entrepreneurship is discussed in the following slides.

Script:

"One option for sealing off leakages is to foster the growth of new businesses within the region that can produce goods or services that are currently purchased from outside the region. Focusing on ways to foster entrepreneurship can strengthen this avenue."

Creation

Growing new enterprises locally to fill the gaps of goods and services purchased from outside the region

Slide: 11

Time: 1 Minute

A number of strategies can be implemented within a region to support this important element of economic growth. This slide highlights a few, but allow the regional team time to suggest others.

Creation: Sample Strategies

- Regional training
- Business coaching
- Entrepreneur networking
- Business incubators

Script:

"How can regions identify and support people interested in launching a new business venture in the region? A number of training models, such as weekend boot camps, FASTTRAC (a multi-week training program), Cashing in on Business Opportunities, or other short-term, targeted business training activities have successfully launched entrepreneurs. Successful business owners can also serve as coaches to those new to the business world. Entrepreneur networking can also help generate needed support for start ups. (Don't forget to consider youth as entrepreneurs!) Business incubators have also provided vital support to beginning businesses.

Do any of these programs exist in the region? What other types of programs exist in the region to support entrepreneurs or new business development?" [Allow time for discussion.]

Slide: 12

Time: 10 Minutes

Sources:
Cashing in on Business Opportunities, an online, how-to guide for entrepreneurs, located at http://srdc.msstate.edu/cashing/

FASTTRAC entrepreneur training, Kauffman Foundation, located at http://fasttrac.org/

Instructions:

A number of key components can influence the success or failure of a new business or entrepreneurial effort. This diagram illustrates a few of those. After introducing the material, divide the team into small groups, using one of the two options listed below. Allow them to brainstorm what they already have in place for each area and what potential avenues for improvement exist.

Script:

"Entrepreneurs (or new business developers) often need or want access to a set of support systems in order to launch and thrive. What does an entrepreneurial supportive region look like? This diagram illustrates the types of support a region can provide for these new enterprises. The range of support can include:

- **Intellectual stimulation**, or an openness to new ideas
- **Access to capital**, which can include start-up funding, loan opportunities, etc.
- **Education**, both formal and non-formal that can help prepare an entrepreneur for the tasks ahead
- **Information** on resources available, how to walk through start up processes, etc.
- **Infrastructure** could include Internet (broadband), transportation, and a host of other supportive structures
- **Services and amenities** – Entrepreneurs tend to be drawn to places with creative options and amenities that would enhance the quality of life. What does your region have that would be attractive?
- **Connections and networks** – Connecting entrepreneurs to other entrepreneurs and related businesses that would strengthen their opportunities for success can make a tremendous difference.
- **Community support** – Generally, the region is supportive of entrepreneurs and seeks to give them the best start possible."

[Stop at this point and ask the regional team to talk in small groups about these eight elements. Which ones are strong in the region and which ones would need work? After a few minutes of discussion, allow time for the groups to report back. Capture key points on two flip charts, "Things We Do Well" and "Potential Areas for Improvement" for later discussion.

Creation: Providing Regional Support

Source: Based on Reynolds, et. al., Small Business Economics 23: 263–284, 2004.

Alternate approach: Post eight charts around the room, each one with a different heading from this chart. Divide the team into small groups and allow time for them to move around the room to each chart and brainstorm what they already have in place for each area and what potential avenues for improvement exist. Once each small group has visited each of the eight charts, take a few minutes to summarize each one. Note that this approach will take longer, but may provide a more detailed summary of each element.]

NOTE: SET has developed a supplemental module specific to entrepreneurship for regions that are interested in exploring this avenue in greater depth.

Slide: 13 continued

Time: 15-20 Minutes

Source: Reynolds, P. D., Carter, N.M., Gartner, W.B., & Greene, P.G. (2004). The prevalence of nascent entrepreneurs in the United States; Evidence from the panel study of entrepreneurial dynamics. *Small Business Economics, 23.* pp. 263-264. Retrieved from http://ehis.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=2&hid=103&sid=d69fec70-f6fe-44f9-b068-c93c53649206%40sessionmgr115

As the team walks through each of the C.A.R.E. components, they will be asked to reflect on what has been done in the past in each realm as well as some potential strategies to consider for the future. Keep a running list of these as you walk through this part of the module. These will be important insights when thinking through assets in the next module and in the plan development in Module Eight.

Creation: Our Region
- What has the region done to support or encourage new business or entrepreneur development in the past?
- What are some potential strategies to consider for the future?

Slide: 14

Time: 1 Minute

Script:

"As we go through each of the C.A.R.E. components, we will take a few minutes to consider what the region has accomplished in the past within each realm and what potential strategies for the future may be worth considering. Let's take a few minutes to consider this first realm: small business/entrepreneur development or Creation."

[These check points can be accomplished in several different ways. You can divide the group into small groups to discuss and report out, you can give everyone sticky notes and ask them to jot ideas to post on flip charts with these labels, or any other process that helps break up the lecture format and get people moving and interacting together.]

This slide introduces the concept of business attraction, or recruitment. However, the attraction efforts are specifically targeted to fill missing pieces from the regional cluster.

"Another potential avenue for stopping leakages is attraction, or recruiting firms that can supply missing goods or services that support the cluster. This involves taking a good look at the elements of the cluster that are provided by external sources and designing a purposeful plan for recruiting those businesses into the region."

Attraction

Attraction seeks to reduce leakages by recruiting into the region firms that can supply missing goods or services that support the cluster.

Slide: 15

Time: 1 Minute

A regional team's efforts to attract an industry should be focused and purposeful rather than driven by blind attraction to any industry out there.

Script:

"Simply put, blindly attracting industry is a strategy of the past, particularly for rural areas. The days of luring businesses to rural regions with the promises of tax incentives are history. Too many times, businesses would enter the region, accept the incentives, and after a short period of time in the region, pick up and move to some other location. This left the area more devastated than it was before the arrival of the business.

However, recruitment efforts that are targeted and purposeful, based on the industry's potential for success within an existing regional cluster and the region's ability to meet the industry's workforce demands, infrastructure needs, education priorities, and regional support (remember Porter's Diamond Theory), are proving to be much more successful. One example of approaching this targeted attraction is provided in the Community Business Matching Model. Let's take a closer look."

The next few slides discuss models that have been used by communities to determine industries that might be successful in particular areas. These models are attraction models, meaning we are identifying industries to invite to the region. These are not blind attraction strategies, where "we'll take anything we can get." Using data that measure the resources, skill levels of workers and other amenities, regions seek industries that might work best in the region.

Attraction: Location Models

- Analyzes the probability of an industry moving to the region

- Evaluates the region's ability to respond to industry needs

- Selects industries with the highest likelihood of success

Slide: 17

Time: 4 Minutes

Script:

"Have you ever heard someone say, 'We are working on attracting _____ (some large manufacturer) to our rural region?' Has this type of strategy been successful? What has worked, and what hasn't worked? Was research done beforehand to determine the likelihood of success for this type of industry in the region? [Allow for a short discussion.]

Location models employ place specific data to calculate the probability of certain types of industries locating in a particular area. These models look at the probability of a firm within a particular industry moving into a region based on the qualities of the region and the existing businesses operating there. This method provides communities with a list of attributes that they need to strengthen before inviting particular industries to operate in the region.

Examining demographic and economic trends can help identify industries that are unlikely to be attracted to the region given the current set of resources available. . . AND THAT'S OK! We can also find industries and businesses that will work well in the region, particularly as they fit with a growing regional cluster."

Instructions:

The Community Business Matching (CBM) Model, a type of location model, is receiving strong reviews from economic development agencies for its comprehensive approach to matching community desires and business needs. The model matches the needs of businesses to the assets and goals of the community. This results in a set of industries that might be successful in the region, and thus deemed a good "fit." The analysis is based on surveys of business needs and a year-long community discussion about what the community desires regarding business.
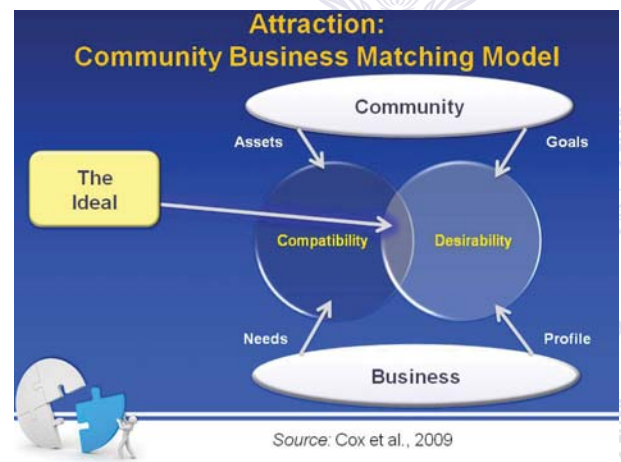
Attraction:
Community Business Matching Model

Source: Cox et al., 2009

Script:

"The Community Business Matching (CBM) Model is a tool that walks a community (or region) through a year-long process to determine the types of industry it would prefer to see locate in the region. The community weighs the economic, social, and environmental impacts of industry and, as a community, determines how to prioritize these impacts. For example, communities that consider environmental issues over economic and social issues would never target an industry that might have a negative impact on the environment. Communities that consider economic issues to be the most important might weigh social and environmental impacts less.

At the same time, businesses are surveyed about the amenities and infrastructure they seek when making location decisions. These could include a skilled labor force, broadband, access to transportation, high quality education, recreational opportunities, etc.

In the end, the region has two measures: desirability, which helps determine how likely a business is to meet the goals of the community, and compatibility, which assesses the likelihood that the business will locate in the community or how well the community's assets meet the demands of the business. By simultaneously solving for desirability and compatibility, the community can more effectively target desired businesses."

NOTE: A supplemental module focusing on the Community Business Matching Model has been developed for SET teams.

Provide time for the regional team to consider past successes and challenges related to attraction efforts in the region. Also, have them consider how this process that links targeted, purposeful attraction to cluster linkages could result in regional strategies.

Script:

Attraction: Our Region

- Past successes

- Past challenges

- Potential attraction strategies related to regional clusters

Slide: 19

Time: 10 Minutes

"Let's think for a minute about this region. What are some past attraction (recruitment) successes or challenges that you have experienced in this region? How can these principles of targeted attraction relate to strengthening the region's identified clusters?"

[Allow time for discussion. Be sure to capture potential strategies on flip charts as the regional team discusses the possibilities.]

This slide introduces the concept of business retention and expansion. These closely related directions both seek to improve existing firms that make up the regional cluster. If a firm within a cluster should crumble, the whole regional cluster is weakened. Likewise, if a firm is unable to expand to meet a growing demand, an opportunity to grow the cluster is lost, leaving the door open for the related dollars to go outside the region.

Retention & Expansion

Supporting existing businesses *within a cluster* so that they can survive and thrive is another avenue for stopping or preventing cluster leakages.

Slide: 20

Time: 2 Minutes

Script:

"The avenues of business retention and expansion are closely related in that they both focus attention on strengthening existing firms within the regional cluster. While some overlap between retention and expansion exists, both are equally important. For instance, if a firm within a cluster should crumble, the whole regional cluster is weakened. Likewise, if a firm is unable to expand to meet a growing demand, an opportunity to grow the cluster is lost, leaving the door open for the related dollars to go outside the region. We will look at these avenues in more detail in the next few slides."

A number of retention and expansion strategies exist. Two promising approaches are noted here and discussed briefly in the following slides.

"A number of strategies exist for strengthening business retention and expansion. We will take a few minutes to briefly examine two promising approaches."

Slide: 21

Time: 2 Minutes

This slide outlines some important benefits of the business retention and expansion study.

Script:

Retention & Expansion Study

- Lets businesses know they are valued
- Helps solve regional business issues
- Connects businesses to regional resources
- Creates connections among regional organizations
- Fosters job retention & growth

Open

Slide: 22

Time: 2 Minutes

"Business retention and expansion studies (or BR&E for short) focus on strengthening the businesses that already exist in a cluster within the region, resulting in a number of potential benefits:

- Lets businesses know they are valued
- Helps solve regional business issues
- Connects businesses to regional resources
- Creates connections among regional organizations
- Fosters job retention and growth

A targeted BR&E study focuses attention on the businesses in the region that are connected to a particular cluster the region wants to strengthen. Through these discussions, the region can develop strategic plans that address commonly identified issues that will help strengthen the cluster as a whole. The next slide outlines this process."

This slide outlines the basic steps in a typical business retention & expansion strategy.

"While business retention and expansion efforts can vary, they often start with a visitation program. A local group, such as the chamber of commerce, recruits volunteers to visit businesses within the cluster, asking them to identify elements in the region that either aid or hinder business success. Additionally, business owners are asked about the future of the business and about their interests in exploring any specific growth opportunities.

The most important part of the process is the follow-up. First, the region responds to identified concerns. For instance, if, during an interview, a particular business says, 'We might have to shut down in the next six months,' the group would immediately explore options for preventing this business from closing. These could include any number of elements, such as infrastructure needs, workforce availability or training, or the need to reduce costs. In addition to these individualized responses, the collective business voices may point to other needs, opportunities and challenges to be addressed in the region. The group would then discuss strategies that could help the region retain businesses and explore avenues to promote expansion, implementing responsive strategies as soon as possible."

Slide: 23

Time: 3 Minutes

Reference: Business Retention and Expansion International is an excellent source for information on this process: http://www.brei.org/

Another strategy that has potential application across the entire C.A.R.E. spectrum is business network development. As this slide notes, this is a formal or informal collaboration among firms within a given cluster for the net benefit of all.

Business Network Development

A formal or informal collaboration among firms that are part of a *cluster* for the purpose of creating a *net benefit* for all involved

Script:

"One strategy that has the potential for strengthening a cluster across the entire C.A.R.E. spectrum is network development. These focus on local people and local businesses, but can also help strengthen creation and recruitment efforts. A business network is a formal or informal collaboration or cooperation among firms that are part of a value chain for the purpose of creating a net benefit for all involved. These networks can also include non-business entities such as government agencies, nonprofits, etc."

Slide: 24

Time: 1 Minute

Allow time for the regional team to explore these questions related to past, present, and potential future retention and expansion efforts. Help them keep the focus on the cluster(s) identified, though some strategies may have more broad-reaching effects.

Script:

"Now that we have considered the importance of retention and expansion efforts in supporting regional clusters, please take a few minutes to consider the questions on the screen. In small groups, outline what your region has done (or is currently doing) to support retention and/or expansion of firms within the region's identified cluster(s).

Then, take a few minutes to identify some potential strategies for the future to support these existing firms."

[Be sure to capture key points on flip charts for later use.]

Retention & Expansion: Our Region

- What has the region done to support:
  – Retention of cluster-related firms?
  – Expansion of cluster-related firms?

- What are some potential future strategies to support cluster retention and expansion?

Slide: 25

Time: 10 Minutes

Draw participants' attention back to Porter's Diamond Theory elements as they begin considering appropriate strategies for strengthening the potential clusters. Module Five's Handout Three: C.A.R.E. for the Region will be valuable in this discussion.

Script:

Slide: 26

Time: 10-15 Minutes

Handout: C.A.R.E. for Your Region (Module Five-Handout Three)

"We have explored a variety of possibilities during the course of this module, both in clusters to strengthen as well as in appropriate strategies. Before we move forward, though, think back to the discussion in Module Five on the four elements that contribute to competitive advantage (Porter's Diamond Theory). Considering these four vital elements of competitive advantage to the specific C.A.R.E. strategies will help further strengthen the regional plan. At the end of Module Five, you were given a handout to consider: C.A.R.E. for the Region. Let's take a few minutes to consider this flowchart in light of what we have been discussing. In small groups, please take a few minutes to walk through the guiding questions in the chart related to the industry(ies) we've been considering."

[If the group is exploring several potential industries to target, you may want to assign different groups a different industry to consider. After groups have had time to think through the process, provide time for each group to report back. Be sure to capture potential strategies on the flip chart started in Module Four. These will be used as a starting point in Module Eight.]

Help participants consider any additional data needs or other information gathering that may be necessary before moving into the planning stage. If information is needed, make sure the group accepts ownership of any action involved in retrieving the information.

Script:

Slide: 27

Time: 3 Minutes

"In Module Seven, we will explore specific assets and barriers in the region in light of the potential strategies we have explored today. The,n we will be ready to connect the pieces to form the regional economic development plan in Module Eight. In preparation for that time, are there any other potential strategies you want to explore further before we begin to develop and finalize a regional plan?"

[Add any identified strategies to the chart started in Module Four. If homework items are identified, be sure the regional team develops a plan for getting the needed information prior to the next SET session.]

Take a few minutes to ask for some feedback from your group on the content of this module using the questions on the slide.

Final Reflections

- What topics did you find most helpful?
- What did you find confusing?
- What other data do you need?
- Other items you want to mention?

"We've gone through a good bit of information in this session. Now please share your ideas and reactions to the topics and strategies introduced to you." [Read through each of the questions outlined on the slide and allow time for discussion.]

Slide: 28

Time: 5 Minutes

Instructions:

Share a preview of Module Seven with the participants using the points on the slide. If any of the work associated with this module is not finished, discuss with the team how they will work between this session and the next to finalize those elements.

Script:

Slide: 29

Time: 5 Minutes

"Thank you for the energy and hard work you devoted to this module. The next module will provide valuable information and tools for uncovering the assets you have in the region. Linking these assets is important for successfully reaching your regional economic development goals." [Briefly highlight points on the slide.]

Acknowledgements
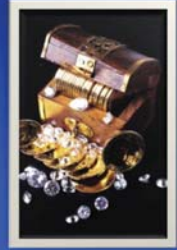
USDA Rural Development
Committed to the future of rural communities.

USDA
United States Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture

RRDC
REGIONAL RURAL
DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

www.srdc.msstate.edu
2012