



Call for Papers

Rural Wealth Creation as a Sustainable Economic Development Strategy

Special Issue of *Community Development*

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Rural regions, particularly low-wealth rural areas, have struggled to put in place the strategies and institutions that build local assets and create wealth that stays local. They have struggled to replenish rural resources and create communities that are resilient in the face of a rapidly changing global environment. Rural communities are facing an enormous potential loss of wealth as current generations retire or pass on, often closing businesses and leaving their assets to heirs who reside outside rural areas. The present economic crisis has produced massive upheaval. In the face of these struggles, the ability of rural areas to contribute to overall economic growth in the U.S. has been limited.

Yet America has never needed vibrant rural areas more than it does now. This moment of crisis could give rise to innovation and an opportunity for renewal. The potential contributions to be made by rural America are significant. Rural areas can responsibly provide the nation with many valuable goods and services such as renewable energy of many types, energy-efficient housing, food that is healthy and affordable, open spaces and recreational opportunities, ecosystem services and carbon offsets, forest products, a healthy and well-trained decentralized labor force, and other innovative products and services that embody a range of values from social justice to environmental sustainability. Effectively making these contributions means avoiding the exploitative patterns of the past and supporting rural and urban leaders in new ways of thinking about economic development and the role of rural based on valuing multiple forms of wealth, including those with non-monetary returns. To respond to today's historic opportunities we need a new approach to development that allows rural areas to build multiple forms of wealth and become stewards of resources in ways that serve the larger public good, and provide for expanded demand-driven opportunities for low income and poor individuals, households, and communities.

Since early 2008, the Ford Foundation has been exploring a wealth-creation approach to rural economic development with a set of place-based partners. The Ford Initiative, *Wealth Creation in Rural Communities*, provides a framework for creating wealth that is rooted in rural regions, including those of persistent poverty, by using a systems approach to intentionally connect people, resources, and markets; to engender investments that create multiple forms of wealth; and to develop new models of local ownership and control. For more information on Wealth Creation in Rural Communities, please visit www.creatingruralwealth.org or www.yellowwood.org/wealthcreation.aspx (archives). A separate effort to look at wealth creation has been led by researchers at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service (ERS). Together, Ford and ERS co-convened a national conference on wealth creation and rural livelihoods that sought to address these issues in a cross-cutting way, bringing researchers,

place-based practitioners, policy makers, and funders together to share knowledge and learning about wealth creation principles, practices and policies. A special issue of *Community Development* is one outgrowth of the strong interest in rural wealth creation as an economic development strategy identified through the conference.

This Call for Papers is soliciting contributions that describe the framework for and outcomes of economic development strategies that create multiple forms of wealth that stick in rural places and integrate rural places into larger economies. More specifically, contributions should explore market-based strategies that are intentionally non-exploitative and reflect mutually beneficial connections between rural and urban areas.

Submission of ideas for articles is open and topics of special interest include, but are not limited to:

- Approaches that successfully demonstrate the construction of sector-based wealth creation value chains as a means for rural wealth creation;
- Evidence of effective rural-urban linkages defined by mutual benefit that build wealth in rural places and offer returns to urban areas;
- New models or applications of existing models for local ownership and/or control of local assets that help to keep wealth local (including revitalization of public assets);
- Examples of the effective use of wealth measurement and systems thinking as a planning and evaluation tool;
- Creative models for engendering investment in rural wealth creation strategies through financing and risk management tools;
- Innovative approaches to engaging private sector partners in rural wealth creation strategies based on mutual self-interest such as inclusive business and social impact investing;
- Approaches to building the capacity of place-based organizations to adopt wealth creation as an organizing framework for their work;
- *This list is not exhaustive and does not preclude other topics.*

The abstracts should **not** be limited to a case study of a specific community unless it is clear that the lessons learned and outcomes are easily scalable and replicable. Likewise, the abstracts should do more than describe current programs; rather, they must review the literature, document the intervention process, and include an evaluative dimension that shows program outcomes in terms of the creation of multiple forms of wealth in rural places.

Selected papers will be refereed and published in an upcoming special issue of *Community Development*. If interested in contributing, please send an abstract, not longer than 500 words outlining the topics to be addressed, methodologies used, and how the paper will contribute to the topic of the special issue to: Deborah Markley (deb@e2mail.org) by **September 15, 2012**. When submitting include CDS RURAL WEALTH CREATION in the subject line. Authors will be notified by **October 1, 2012** as to whether they will be invited to prepare a full paper.

Final submissions of the papers will be expected by **March 31, 2013** and then will be submitted through the usual refereeing process used by *Community Development*. For additional information regarding the journal's formatting requirements, see www.tandf.co.uk/journals/rcod.