

- **Leadership development and civic engagement**

Rural areas cannot prosper without well informed and effective leaders. The region's Land Grant Universities (LGUs) have long provided leadership development for rural areas in a variety of ways. As the LGUs face increasing budgetary pressure in the current fiscal environment, more cost effective ways of helping to develop new rural leaders are needed. The region has a need to share information on how to be an effective leader to the next generation. The region is also host to a number of federally recognized tribes with unique systems of governance; there may be important lessons to be learned in sharing information on leadership development across the region. Generally, rural leaders endeavor to deliver effective government services in an era of aging and declining population and reduced tax base, while rural businesses leaders need to keep their workplaces updated and tap into new markets. Communities also do well consider succession planning for leadership in key business, not-for-profits, and local government. Further, effective leaders also engage local populations and engender collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern.