



FINAL PROJECT REPORT

August 2013 Report

Rural Business Enterprise Grant
RBEG Grant Number 32-055-263114011???

Background & Introduction

The RBEG supported officially launched on January 2011. This document represents our **Final Project Report** for our second RBEG Grant that ended in August 2013. The following table provides a summary of the Project’s primary goals:

<p>Goal 1 Community Awareness</p>	<p>Goal 1 focused on going deeper into Year-2 of the RBEG Grant for Deuel County. It’s primary focus was in the communities of Gary, Astoria, Toronto, Bemis, Goodwin, Altamont, Clear Lake, and Brandt. Office hours were held each week in Clear Lake, Gary and Toronto. Helping the communities, entities and individuals learn and become familiar with DADi, our mission, strategic goals and outcome of the organization through whatever means can make that happen: website, providing workshops, civic responsibilities, newspaper communiqués, newsletter, building up database, social media, digital development, personal contact with county businesses, attending conferences & seminars, webinars, and participation in many things to promote DADi and our mission.</p>
<p>Goal 2 Entrepreneur Program & Resources E-Coaching</p>	<p>Goal 2 focused heavily on continued E-coaching and entrepreneurial targeting.</p>
<p>Goal 3 Incubators: Business Resource Center Deuel Community Kitchen</p>	<p>Goal 3 focuses on building a stronger and more sustainable collaborative around KECI including the existing partners of Kansas Farm Bureau, Network Kansas, the Kansas Small Business Development Centers, Advancing Rural Prosperity, the RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship and USDA Rural Development in Kansas. Within Goal 3, we hope to engage other systemic partners like the State of Kansas.</p>
<p>Goal 4 Sustainability</p>	

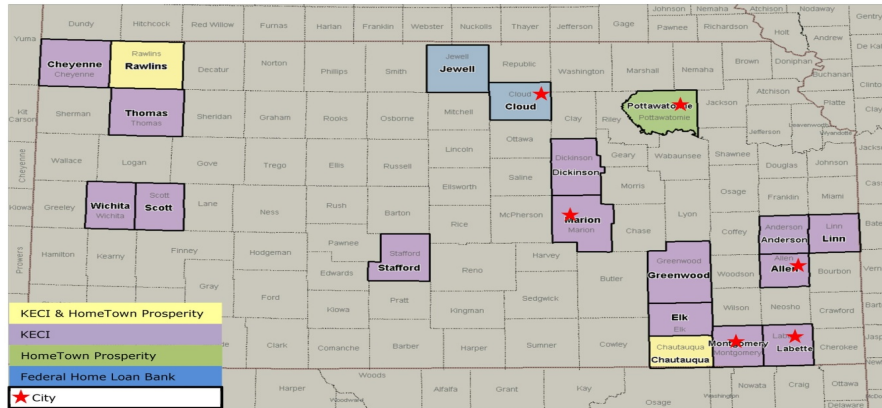
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- Section 1 – Project & Quarterly Progress
- Section 2 – Challenges Encountered During the Project & Quarter
- Section 3 – The Future of the Kansas Entrepreneurial Communities Project
- Section 4 – Financial Report

Section 1 Project & Quarterly Progress

The following map illustrates our Project’s community portfolio as of this 4th Quarter of 2012:



As the map illustrates, we have a substantial and diverse portfolio of communities both geographically and demographically.

Attached are three spreadsheets that provide key performance benchmark information and progress being realized towards objectives. Background information is available on the metric system we are employing and has been provided to USDA Rural Development Kansas as part of our regular partners meetings. Please refer to these spreadsheets for progress information. These sheets are updated monthly based on assessment from our community coaching teams.

By design, we have kept these reports brief and summary in focus. Kansas USDA Rural Development staff, including the Kansas State Director Patty Clark, has actively engaged in our regular leadership team calls and meetings. This active engagement has brought great guidance and value to the productivity of the project and has ensured deep understanding of our progress, challenges and decisions. We greatly value this engagement.

Project outcome highlights include the following:

Filling the Community Pipeline. KECI, during the life of this RBEG supported project, has exceeded our application projections of community engagement. Over the past five quarters, the portfolio of year 1, year 2 and now year 3 communities has grown contributing to greater economic development impacts (e.g., increased business profitability, new investment, job creation and saves and local tax base expansion) and

quarters, the portfolio of year 1, year 2 and now year 3 communities has grown contributing to greater economic development impacts (e.g., increased business profitability, new investment, job creation and saves and local tax base expansion) and richer opportunities to expand our community-based learning. *Please refer to the first two attachments for specific details on our KECI evolved community portfolio.*

Filling the Pipeline of Entrepreneurs. This project has successfully increased economic development in our portfolio of rural communities. Field activities supported by this grant largely ceased (also work continued through other funding) at the end of the 3rd Quarter of 2012. The following impact information was shared in our last quarterly report and provides a summary of our overall job creation impacts for the project:

Our proposed and approved RBEG grant promised we would achieve the following outcomes:

*At Least 10 Jobs Created or Saved
Further Demonstration of the KECI Framework and Process
Expanded Number of KECI Year 1 and Year 2 Communities
Articulation with the Network KS and KS SBDC Systems (referrals)
E Community Enrollment
Economic Gardening Leads*

Going forward we are employing the following specific metrics for guiding and documenting our progress:

Change in Active Communities	Baseline – Change in Numbers – Names
Active Entrepreneur Clients	Community – Numbers – Business Names
Jobs Created or Saved	Community – Numbers – Business Names
Referrals to SBDC	Community – Numbers
Referrals to Economic Gardening	Community – Businesses
E Community Enrollment	Numbers – Names – Progress
Other Metrics	Change in Community E Capacity
Network KS Activity	Community – Numbers

The following summarizes our project accounting of grant related economic development impacts:

*16 Total Communities Engaged in KECI
45 Active Entrepreneur Clients
44 Jobs Created or Saved
12 New Business Starts
15 KSBDC Client Referrals
2 Economic Gardening Client Referrals
3 Additional E Communities
10 of 16 KECI Communities are or will be E Communities
11 New E Community Loans*

In our RBEG application, we committed to creating or saving at least 10 jobs. Based on this accounting, we have exceeded our goal by 4.4 times not including jobs created by new business formation.

Articulation and Integration of KECI into the Kansas Entrepreneurship System. Very significant progress has been realized toward articulating and integrating Kansas Entrepreneurial Community learning and activities into the existing entrepreneurship support system in Kansas. This progress is hallmarked by three significant outcomes.

First, an articulation agreement has been negotiated with the Kansas Small Business Development Centers to ensure a stronger operational connection between KECI and the KSBDC.

Second, a pilot project has been established with Network Kansas whereby four new

Second, a pilot project has been established with Network Kansas whereby four new Network Kansas E Communities (i.e., Wabaunsee, Ellis, Sherman and Montgomery Counties) will employ KECI activities to stimulate deal flow and accelerate economic development outcomes.

Third, KECI has been integrated as a core economic development strategy within the new Project 17 serving the economically-challenged, southeastern Kansas region.

Addition of Strategic Partners. Over this period, KECI has maintained active engagement of the following partners: Kansas Farm Bureau, Kansas USDA Rural Development, Network Kansas, Kansas Small Business Development Centers, Advancing Rural Prosperity and the national Center for Rural Entrepreneurship. Over this period, two important new strategic partners were added including the Advanced Manufacturing Institute with Kansas State University and the Project 17 Collaborative.

Sustainability of KECI. This work will continue for two very important reasons. The first reason is rooted in the good news that up to three years of new funding has been secured. The second reason rests with the integration of KECI within both Network Kansas and the KSBDC programs.

Section 2

Challenges Encountered During the Quarter

Beyond the normal operational challenges associated with collaborative work, engaging with communities and assisting entrepreneurs – we are pleased to report that there have not been material challenges during the last quarter. During the life of this project, such challenges have been documented in each of our quarterly reports.

Section 3

The Future of the Kansas Entrepreneurial Communities Project

The vision of KECI focused on enabling rural communities to become active contributors within Kansas' entrepreneurial development system. Our hope was to reach underserved communities and entrepreneurs, increase communities in entrepreneur-focused economic development and stimulate increased economic development in rural Kansas. Bottom line, KECI has made meaningful and hopeful progress towards these three visions. Adequate progress has been made to ensure continued funding and operation of KECI in 2013 and beyond. However, 2013 will be a critical year. During this year, KECI must meet a higher standard of evaluation and cost/benefit analysis. Progress realized in 2013 will determine the likely level of KECI support and activity in 2014 and beyond.

Section 4

Financial Report

Match Compliance. Based on community progress related to the E Communities relationship, we have realized our match during this period. USDA has certified our match compliance and waived us from partner time tracking. Partner engagement tracking is continuing. Documentation has been provided earlier regarding our match realization associated with this project.

Questions and Additional Information

As experienced entrepreneurs, business coaches, and community development practitioners, our passion is to preserve a lifestyle treasured across rural America. We engage directly with



communities to identify, prepare, and implement a development pathway to reverse rural community decline. We represent the Kansas Community Coaching Team responsible for implementing the statewide Kansas Hometown Prosperity Initiative, the Kansas Entrepreneurial Communities Initiative and regional development efforts in Kansas dating back to 2003. Organized as a Kansas based not-for-profit, the mission of Advancing Rural Prosperity, Inc. (ARPI) is to provide practical, in-the-field guidance and support to enhance the sustainability of rural communities and organizations.

Questions and Additional Information

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