



## Champion Report Template

Theme Area: CORE TEAM UPDATE

Champions: Tim Houle, Dan Frank, Phil Hunsicker, Molly Zins, Stacey Stockdill, Deanna Hemmesch, Cheryal Hills, Tad Erickson, Joe Schulte, Melissa Rademacher, Bob McLean.

Date: From April 15, 2014 to July 15, 2014

### What NEW success have you had in moving your theme goals forward over the reporting period?

#### 1. FUNDING:

**USDA-RCDI was AWARDED - \$152,492.00** to provide economic development capacity building of 10 Resilient Region “vital projects” – applied for \$300k so only funded half.

#### **USDA RD – Farm Bill 6025:**

Three USDA-RD programs: 1) Community Facilities, 2) Rural Utilities Category, 3) Rural business and cooperative development (RBOG/RBEG)....will set aside funding for projects that specifically speak to strategies within a regional plan. Given our national attention, projects from our region are likely to be very competitive. *Hills were invited by RUPRI to speak to USDA and Deputy Secretary Doug O’Brian on May 29, 2014 and later to a White House listening session on June 5, 2014 to give comment on this program design.*

#### **NWAF Conversations:**

**A team (Stacey S, Phil H, Arlene J, Cheryal H, Dan F, Don H and Molly Zins) met with NWAF on June 2 to discuss the following idea and it was well received. It is likely R5DC will respond to an invitation for funding in early fall for a potential 2015 and 2016 funding.**

Members of the core team are in initial conversations with the Northwest Area Foundation as to how to potentially partner to add value to the Resilient Region implementation efforts through sharing of our implementation processes and project support.

A. Prepare materials to help tell our story (as we are being asked to do - at an overwhelming pace).

B. Support implantation PROJECTS . Use our learnings to accelerate the high-achieving projects, support the mid-range/stage projects or those projects poised with opportunity for success. Shift stumbling projects to new direction.

Explain how did implementation projects impact the region, jobs, poverty and individual community wealth. How did projects within the \$30 million add value to the other regional assets?

#### 2. Policy:

The Resilient Region policies have been mailed to all 65 cities and delivered to the 5 counties. We have all policies and studies posted to the Resilient Region website.

**LOCALLY: CITIES** contacting us to share that they are **USING** the **TOOLS!**

**STATE: Participation on the Nat. Governor’s Assoc. - MN Clean Energy and Economic Dev. Policy Academy**

**NATIONAL: Hills sits on RUPRI State Policy Panel – participates in farm bill program design for USDA RD see note #4 below.**

### 3. **Champion Training:**

Arlene Jones and Cheryal Hills attended and brought back several new ideas and potential tools. We are working through two “value-chains”; Local Foods and Service Member Housing. We continue to investigate how this practice might add value to the Community Asset Profiles being collected and distributed on the RR website.

### 4. **OUTREACH:**

The Institute for Sustainable Communities Learning Network invited Resilient Region partners to apply for a team peer-to-peer learning summit which was later canceled.

Webinar with over 150 attendees through the **National Association of Development Organizations** on “The nuts and bolts of designing a regional plan”. [http://www.nado.org/regional\\_plan\\_webinar/](http://www.nado.org/regional_plan_webinar/)

Featured in a Blandin Blog <http://blog.blandinfoundation.org/2014/06/resilientregion/> as a result of Dan Frank, Phil Hunsicker and Cheryal Hills presenting at **Center for Small Towns Summit** - June 4, 2014

#### **Interviews with:**

**Policy Link – California** – *see note #1 below* with Stacey Stockdill and Cheryal Hills for their national study of effective Sustainable Community model Governance Structures – June 23, 2014

**ECONorthwest - Oregon** - *see note #2 below* with Cheryal Hills for their tool-kit designed for the national Urban Sustainability Directors Network – June 17, 2014

**National Governors Association – Washington DC** – Discussion with Kentucky – *See note #3 below* with Cheryal Hills on Kentucky Workforce Development – June 24, 2014

**Kansas Association of Regional Development Organizations – Kansas** – *Hills written into a statewide application to USDA to mentor Kansas RDO’s on how to consider the Resilient Region Distributed leadership model and effective RDO management.*

## **NOTE #1**

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**From:** Keziah Mwanga

**Sent:** Friday, June 13, 2014 1:12 PM

**To:** Cheryal Hills

**Subject:** RE: Sustainable Communities Initiative (SCI) Program\_PolicyLink Request for a Phone Conversation

Dear Cheryal Hills,

My name is Keziah Mwang’u. I am an intern working with PolicyLink this summer to support the Sustainable Communities Initiative (SCI) capacity-building in support of SCI grantees.

As you are most likely aware, PolicyLink is among a team of organizations contracted by HUD to provide capacity-building and technical assistance for SCI grantees. The role of PolicyLink is to support SCI grantees in advancing Social Equity in Planning, Participation, and Decision-making.

Now that the 2010 grantees have completed their planning grants and the 2011 grantees are in the homestretch of their planning processes, we are tailoring our capacity-building support to more specifically focus on implementation.

Your organization was recommended to us by your HUDGTR as one of the grantees we should talk to, to learn more about your consortia structure and the structure you have developed or are planning to develop to guide the implementation of your plan. Would you be willing to have a brief phone conversation with Sarita Turner, PolicyLink, Senior Associate, who is leading this project, myself and whoever else you may want to include so we can chat about this?

## **NOTE #2**

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**From:** Kate Washington

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 28, 2014 2:43 PM

**To:** Cheryal Hills

**Subject:** ECONorthwest Sustainable Economic Development Toolkit

Hi Cheryal -

My name is Kate Washington and I'm working with ECONorthwest in Portland, OR to create a sustainable economic development toolkit for the Urban Sustainability Directors Network. We'd like to include Region 5 as a case study, especially because we want to be able to represent rural successes. I've reviewed many of your documents and I'd like to ask some follow up questions. I've included them below because I'll be at a conference the rest of this week and I want you to have time to review them.

Please either responds by email or we can schedule a time to speak on the phone.

Thank you for your time -

Kate

### **Questions**

I understand that implementation is about 3 years in and it looks like this have gone exceptionally well.

Can you tell me how things are going right now?

30 million toward implementation – policy being reviewed for adoption by LUG

What are some challenges you have faced or foresee?

Making sure we slow the train to look at how we are doing the implementation – deeper dive on evaluation.

What would you highlight as particular successes? What factors contribute to those successes? And overall, how were you able to get so much done so quickly?

Local foods work intersections with: health care, energy, microlending, workforce dev (ag instructor).  
Coordination (holder of the flame) and the Champions working together.

What would you highlight as unique features to your process?

The co-creation path, the scenario building, the distributed leadership model deployed. The MASSIVE inclusionary approach unlike anything ever done in MN. The engagement from State agencies. So much more.

What other places inspired you during this process?

MANY: Envision Utah, Mobilize Main, Michigan Grand Vision, LUTED in Pennsylvania and a few others.

Funding for Region 5 has been very impressive – was that part of the plan all along?

YES.....we wanted results but what is MUCH more impressive than the external funding, is the internal funding we have used differently to address our strategies.

Can you think of anything you'd do differently at this point?

Even our mistakes were lessons learned so no.

### **NOTE #3**

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**From:** Shanbacker, Elise  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 19, 2014 4:18 PM  
**To:** Cheryal Hills  
**Subject:** NGA Meeting Opportunity

Dear Cheryal,

Chuck Fluharty at RUPRI recommended I get in touch with you about an event the National Governors Association is holding July 27 through August 1 in Louisville, KY. The event is the summer meeting of a group of state workforce development officials convened by NGA, the National Association of State Liaisons for Workforce Development Partnerships. We are planning a session on rural workforce challenges and solutions, and are looking for a speaker to frame key issues and propose some questions for small group discussion, though we are flexible on format.

The session is tentatively set for the afternoon of Wednesday, July 30. We reached out to Chuck who referred us to you, as "one of our nation's most thoughtful rural economic development and workforce thinkers." If this sounds like something you would be interested in participating in, I would be happy to set up a call to further discuss this potential opportunity to collaborate.

Thanks very much,

**Elise Shanbacker**

Senior Policy Analyst | Economic, Human Services, Workforce Division  
National Governors Association Center for Best Practices  
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### **NOTE #4**

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RUPRI website: <http://www.rupri.org/panelandnetworkviewer.php?id=52>

USDA Dept. of Ag. Secretary Vilsack presentation: <http://vimeo.com/87492467>

**The State Rural Policy Initiative is an exciting new program that will provide rural policy leaders with powerful, proven tools to enhance rural research, practice and public policy at the state level. Building on pioneering work already underway in many states, the initiative will seek to stimulate, accelerate and broaden policy and program innovation throughout rural America. The ultimate goal is to create more vibrant rural communities and to contribute to the increased economic vitality of the 50 states and the nation as a whole. We welcome you to this important conversation!**

#### **State Policy Initiative**

The Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI) has been conducting a process over the last year facilitating discussions on the need for and the framing of a program of work for the State Rural Policy Initiative. The initiative is an exciting new program that will provide rural policy leaders with powerful, proven tools to enhance rural research, practice and public policy at the state level. The ultimate goal is to create more vibrant rural communities and increased prosperity in our rural regions, our 50 states, and our nation

We were honored to have Secretary Tom Vilsack join us to set the powerful charge for this initiative, and for the insightful comments and participation of Acting Under Secretary for Rural Development Doug O'Brien and Deputy Chief Economist Rob Johansson last fall in Lincoln Nebraska.

The initiative has transformed into a Panel and is identifying its Plan of Work. All of the comments and suggestions we have received will guide us in development. Please continue to provide us more suggestions and comments by sending to Teresa Kittridge: [teresa@rupri.org](mailto:teresa@rupri.org)

**Panel Chair:**

David Terrell, Director, Economic Development Policy, Ball State University; Formerly Senior Adviser, Indiana Lieutenant Governor

**State Policy Panel Members:**

Paul Costello, Executive Director, Vermont Council on Rural Development

Wes Curtis, Executive Director, SUU Regional Services, Utah

Barry L. Denk, Director, The Center for Rural Pennsylvania

Michael W-P Fortunato, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Engaged Scholar, and Director of the Center for Rural Studies at Sam Houston State University.

Bobby Gierisch, Director Emeritus, State Policy Programs; Coordinator, Texas Rural Innovators Forum

Cheryl Lee Hills, Executive Director Region Five Development Commission, MN

John Molinaro Appalachian Partnership for Economic Growth (APEG) President and CEO

Christy Tomlinson Morton, Executive Director, Center for Rural Virginia

Charles P. "Chuck" Schroeder, Founding Executive Director of the Rural Futures Institute University of Nebraska.

Connie Stewart, Executive Director at the California Center for Rural Policy (CCRP)

Norman Walzer, Senior Research Scholar in the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University

## Contributing to Rural Unity and Progress

The RUPRI State Policy Panel

Rural America, encompassing 80 percent of this nation's land, is home to 60 million citizens. For decades, the people and the land of rural America have provided fuel, food and fiber for the nation as a whole. The history, the heritage and the culture of our nation have their roots in our small and rural villages, country sides and open landscapes. Today, rural communities and the working landscape of rural America are foundations of strength and resiliency, providing untold contributions to national security, sustainability and prosperity. As such, the health and welfare and the future of this country are directly linked to the wellbeing of rural America.

The United States cannot sustain and grow its economy without considering the interdependent nature of rural and urban areas. Thus, there is a need to articulate local, state, and national policies that provide fair and equitable opportunities for rural communities to participate fully in our nation's democracy, economy, culture, and society. For rural America, challenged by geographic isolation and lack of population density, we also must recognize that collaboration, partnership, innovation, and risk-taking are key to collective success.

While the federal government must always maintain a prominent role in establishing policies, programs, and funding mechanisms that work for rural America, the individual states are acting as creative

laboratories for collaboration and innovation. State level government, institutions of higher learning, and community based organizations are well-suited to help communities and their citizen's lead and direct change at the local level.

It is with these beliefs that the work of the RUPRI State Policy Panel Initiative is guided by the following principles and practices:

- Build capacity in rural areas – strengthen the ability of rural communities and regions to plan for and implement intentional futures, with recognition of the beneficial interdependence of rural areas and urban centers.
- Promote participation and collaboration of people and groups defined by age, gender, ethnicity, income, geography, and any other relevant attributes in the decision-making process.
- Emphasize the need for sustainable policies that include stewardship of land, water, air and other natural resources.
- Advance equality of opportunities for financial, cultural and social success.
- Encourage individual participation in local affairs and active participation by rural residents in state and national affairs.

The RUPRI State Policy Panel Initiative will pursue these principles by:

- Documenting and sharing sound promising programs, policies, and procedures on matters pertaining to rural community and economic development;
- Coordinating and conducting research to inform and document rural policies and practices;
- Informing and educating all levels of the federal government, the philanthropic community and others about rural America and the challenges and opportunities it faces, encouraging them in their respectful roles to help address and support those challenges and opportunities;
- Helping rural America identify, implement, and maximize viable, sustainable options for renewal and development of its economies and communities.
- Serving as a clearinghouse for current information on rural related issues, recognizing and not duplicating the work of others.
- Connecting practice and research to policy developers and implementers – lifting data, research and the stories of successful efforts, from the ground to policy leaders and agencies.

Together, we will raise a voice for the communities and regions of rural America, and, in service to all our rural partners, we will advance public policy unity and progress by adding up innovative and effective ideas, policies and practices from leadership throughout rural America.