The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development

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About the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development

One of four RRDCs
Housed at Penn State, Dept. of Agricultural Economics, Sociology and Education, covers WV up to ME

http://nercrd.psu.edu

Core funding of $500,000+ from USDA NIFA and NERA
plus additional grant funding (avg. > $1.25 mn/year)

Board of Directors: LGU Extension and Research plus
NERA: Mike O’Neil, Ken La Valley

Recruiting for an Extension/Outreach leader position within the Center
NERCRD Resources for Extension

- Facilitating multi-state Extension collaborations
  - What Works conference series
  - Small grants program
  - Formal networking
  - Informal collaborations
- Various Extension Materials
  - Research-based
  - Off-the-shelf resources
NERCRD 2020 Areas of Emphasis: Overview

Economic Development, Innovation and Resilience

Food Systems and Agriculture

Behavioral Health
NERCRD 2020 Areas of Emphasis: Overview

- Broadband
- Economic resilience and rebuilding rural communities
- Urban flight (housing, tourism)
- Innovation & entrepreneurship
- Farm size and survival
- Intergenerational programs

Economic Development, Innovation and Resilience

Food Systems and Agriculture

Behavioral Health
NERCRD 2020 Areas of Emphasis: Overview

- Economic Development, Innovation and Resilience
- Food Systems and Agriculture
- Behavioral Health

- Visualizing spatial supply chains, rural-urban linkages
- Food System resilience
- USDA/AMS support of local food
- Agritourism
- Beer/Wine, hops, hemp
- Nutrient density of NE food
NERCRD 2020 Areas of Emphasis: Overview

- Economic Development, Innovation and Resilience
- Food Systems and Agriculture
- Behavioral Health

- COVID-19 Case Fatalities
- Life expectancy
- Opioids addiction, including lingering effects of disasters; role of occupational risks
- Creativity, and innovation
- Farmers’ mental health
NE Center’s research cited in *The U.S. President’s 2019 Economic Report* (Council of Economic Advisors):

“We found your research to be insightful and critical to the completion of the 2019 Economic Report of the President.”

CEA Chair K. Hassett
Outreach Highlight

• Producer Association formed in Delaware (Andy Wetherill);
• NIFA-funded Minority-Serving Institution capacity building grant with DSU, UMES and TSU, supported by NERCRD (2011-16)
  • “First State African American Farmers’ Association”
    • In 2020, received 501(c)(3) status; working with DSU to provide mentorship and experiential learning to youth in rural and urban communities
• Manual available on our website (bit.ly/2LrJHu4)
• Scientific paper in J. Agric., Food Systems and Comm. Dev.

Collaboration Highlight: Research and outreach on *Innovation*

- Rural innovation (various projects including a $500K NIFA grant)
  - Census Research Data center project
- Rural innovation issues briefs (ERS-funded)
- Sponsoring a mini-sabbatical by Charlie French (UNH)
  - New edited book: *Building Rural Community Resilience Through Innovation and Entrepreneurship*

Other miscellaneous projects (new)

• Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement
  • Supporting socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, veterans groups

• Broadband
  • Joint RRDC statement on need for investment
  • ECOP Monday minute

• Agri-Tourism
  • New competitively funded NIFA grant, $500K
  • Univ. Vermont, Oklahoma State and others
COVID-19: AMS Project with Univ. of Kentucky

- USDA/Ag Marketing Service-funded hub designed to assist local and regional food producers respond to COVID-19
- Cooperative agreement with the University of Kentucky, Colorado State University and NERCRD (Penn State)
- Exploring U.S. local and regional food systems impacts, adaptations and innovations related to COVID-19
- $1mn +
- [https://lfscovid.localfoodeconomics.com](https://lfscovid.localfoodeconomics.com)
Pandemic-related changing consumer search terms: food

NERCRD COVID-19 Issues Brief No. 2020-7
C. Schmidt, S.J. Goetz, S.J. Rocker, Z. Tian (with updates)
Understanding the impact of COVID-19

Northeast COVID-19 Cases per capita and Interstates
COVID-19 and Vegetables production

Also examining rural-urban supply chains from farms via processors and wholesalers to consumers
Assessing exposure of farms with direct sales to consumers to COVID-19 cases
Goals of the NERCRD small-grant program

- Encourages collection of impact data on Extension programs
  - Builds on earlier NERCRD efforts to promote impact reporting
- Encourages collaboration across state lines
  - Several states have very few CED Extension staff (if any)
  - Cuts down on “reinventing the wheel”
- $63k committed (43K now); 39 people from nine states (this year)
- Focus this year: innovation or tourism.
Projects currently funded by NERCRD

Rural Main Street Revitalization
• NH, ME, WV; builds on UNH’s Main Street Academy to strengthen the economy, bringing vibrancy and expanding leadership

Marketing Hometown America
• PA, WV, Nebraska; helps communities to recruit new residents

Best Practices in Bike/Pedestrian Trail Data Collection and Monitoring
• Builds on Downtowns and Trails Project (2017-18 grant cycle); CT, NH, VT, Minnesota

Farm Fresh Food Boxes Vermont, CA, WA

Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities
• PA, MD, NE, MI; hoping to implement post-pandemic
Developing a Coordinated Community Risk Management Approach to Health and Health Insurance among Farms

- Three collaborating states: MD, DE and OH
- Builds on two previous initiatives:
  - Vermont Summit on Health, Agriculture and Rural Economic Development
  - Smart Choice-Smart Use Health Insurance curriculum
- Summits convened stakeholders across sectors to develop short-term collaborative efforts to address the issues raised at the summit.
- → Led to a $1 mn federal grant
Recreation Economy: Tourism conference sparks conversation
Mixed feelings on economic shift
By Lucy Kleiner, The Astorian, Oct 11, 2019

Helping local businesses benefit from tourist dollars

Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian
Conducted in 2017-2018 and an update is underway in collaboration with WVU’s Doug Arbogast

- Provides national context of Extension’s tourism programming and resource allocation
- Reveals opportunities for strengthening Extension tourism development initiatives
- Paper in review at *Journal of Extension*
Regional Research and Practice Affinity Groups

- Connecting NE practitioners and scholars on core programming and research topics across institutions...

Survey question: Please indicate which group topics you would be most interested in participating (N=54)
NERCRD Resources for Extension

• Documenting impacts: https://bit.ly/2Z2aR2C
• Working with communities: https://bit.ly/3dKzDZ0
  • Research resources: our publications/presentations provide data that can inform your work with communities
• Conducting network analyses: https://bit.ly/2LrJHu4
• Resources derived from our small grants program (e.g., an infobrief on connecting downtowns and trails, First Impressions webinar series, and the forthcoming handbook on running statewide health and vitality forums): http://bit.ly/2TerBzj
• Links to other Centers – e.g., farmer mental health: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OzPM6LwqRek
  • http://rrdc.info
Pandemic-related changing consumer search terms: food

NERCRD COVID-19
Issues Brief No. 2020-7
Claudia Schmidt, Stephan J. Goetz, Sarah J. Rocker, Zheng Tian
Thank You!

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