Real Solutions for Real People in Rural Nevada Community Planning

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The Planning Challenge in Rural America

“In 2008 approximately one-fourth of the U.S. population lived in rural areas, which encompassed 83 percent of the nation’s land. Population growth and economic prospects for residents in these communities lagged behind those in other areas of the nation.”

“While urban poverty declined between 1997 and 2000, rural poverty did not. High poverty persists in many rural regions, including Appalachia, the Mississippi Delta, and the Rio Grande valley.”

“…many rural communities, particularly in the Midwest, lost population to the extent that some were on the brink of extinction.”

- Steven Koven and Thomas Lyons, Economic Development: Strategies for State and Local Practice
## Types of Rural Areas

### Varied Demographic and Economic Profiles
Nevada Counties Within the Other Nevada Nonmetropolitan Area
2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Elko County</th>
<th>Esmeralda County</th>
<th>Eureka County</th>
<th>Humboldt County</th>
<th>Lander County</th>
<th>Lincoln County</th>
<th>Pershing County</th>
<th>White Pine County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Population</strong></td>
<td>48,818</td>
<td>783</td>
<td>1,987</td>
<td>16,528</td>
<td>5,775</td>
<td>5,345</td>
<td>6,753</td>
<td>10,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median Age</strong></td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>40.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Per Capita Income</strong></td>
<td>$26,879</td>
<td>$34,571</td>
<td>$30,306</td>
<td>$25,965</td>
<td>$25,287</td>
<td>$18,184</td>
<td>$17,519</td>
<td>$21,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median Household Income</strong></td>
<td>$75,171</td>
<td>$57,292</td>
<td>$75,179</td>
<td>$69,023</td>
<td>$67,157</td>
<td>$56,167</td>
<td>$61,410</td>
<td>$62,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Household Size</strong></td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>2.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**State of Nevada** (2010): 2,700,551 Total Population; 36.3 Median Age; $25,284 Per Capita Income; $51,001 Median Household Income; 2.65 Average Household Size.
How do we Confront Challenges?

“The prime issue for state and local economic development leaders is not whether some industries will shrink and others expand...The more fundamental issue is how communities confront their economic challenges and how they respond to their situation and environment.”

- Steven Koven and Thomas Lyons
Our First Exercise: Evaluating Our Community

- Community leaders have an obligation to evaluate their community objectively – by doing so, they can properly develop short-term and long-term strategies.

- Complete the provided checklist for evaluating your community:
  - Rank each of the 10 environmental factors and accompanying subfactors as Low (1), Medium (2), or High (3).
  - Once you have scored each subfactor, sum the results for each factor.
  - Complete this exercise by yourself. Once completed, we will then discuss the results as a group.
Types of Rural Areas

- Amenity-Rich Areas
- Declining Resource Areas
- Chronically Poor Areas
- Amenity/Decline Areas
Amenity-Rich Areas

- Key Issues: Managing Growth, Affordable Housing, Creation of Livable-Wage Jobs.

- “Aspen Effect”: strong growth forces middle-income residents out due to high/rising cost of living.

- Employment is High, Poverty is Low.

- Key Assets: Natural Environment.
Declining Resource Areas

- Key Issues: Property Values Declining, School Enrollments Declining, High Out-Migration by Youth.

- Once dependent on Agriculture but now the resource is in decline. Example: timber, mining, or related manufacturing industries.
Chronically Poor Areas


- Crime, Drugs, and Unemployment are the dominant public concerns.
Amenity/Decline Areas

- Share similar characteristics of both Amenity-Rich and Declining Resources areas.

- Key Issues: Numbers of “resource-based” jobs are declining but have not completely vanished, Aging Population reflects Out Migration of Youth.

- Arrival of “Amenity Migrants” – individuals who value the natural resource asset and value environmental rules.
Beyond Rural Economic Development

“The heading ‘rural planning’ as a sector of government involvement is often absent from plan documents in many countries. But policy and legislation related to agriculture, transportation and communications, education, health and human services, and social welfare sectors generally addressed in plans, have had far reaching and profound impacts on the physical conditions of, and infrastructure availability in, rural areas. They have also determined the range and quality of services accessible to rural populations.”

Our Second Exercise

What planning issues are important to your community?
Strategies by Area Type

- **Amenity-Rich**: Open Space Acquisition, Land Protection Strategies, Sprawl Control Strategies.


- **Chronically Poor**: Early-Childhood Education Programs, Language Development Programs.

- **Amenity-Rich/Declining Resource**: Prioritize New Infrastructure Investment, Improve Connection to established/neighboring urban centers.
Six “Generic” Rural Community Development Strategies

- Use of Telecommunications Technologies.
- Improve Access to Health Care.
- Develop Effective Educational Facilities.
- Accessible/Efficient Public Transportation.
- Develop Quality Affordable Housing.
- Focus on Quality Job Creation.
Our Third Exercise

What strategies can we employ to address your community’s rural planning issues?
Our Fourth Exercise

What resources will you need in order to implement these strategies?
“The Small Town and Rural Planning Division of APA is a forum for the exchange of ideas and information of interest to professional and citizen planners in our smaller communities and rural areas.

We are a collaborative group of rural and small town planners, citizen planners, and allied professionals dedicated to the physical, social, and economic diversity of North America's non-metropolitan areas. As a division, we do our best to keep an eye on issues that challenge the ever changing face or "Small Town America" and share ideas and success stories from the rural heartland of the United States and abroad.”
Thank You.

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