Update on current work

Kent Olson
Assistant Dean, Extension Center for Community Vitality

2018
2016-2021 Program Focus

- Advancing high growth entrepreneurship
- Business expansion including small- and medium-sized and ethnically diverse enterprises
- Developing and recruiting a high-skilled regional workforce

The EDA CENTER at the University of Minnesota Crookston
Economic Impact Analysis

Closure of St. Cloud refrigeration and home freezer manufacturing plant

- With city of St. Cloud and St. Cloud State University

How will St. Cloud handle the loss of one of its largest employers?

Cathy Wurzer · Apr 4, 2018

In January, appliance giant Electrolux announced that it's closing a manufacturing plant in St. Cloud. Not immediately — the company plans to continue production there through next year. But economists at St. Cloud State University and the University of Minnesota Extension Service say the plant's closure will send waves through the local economy, affecting other businesses, jobs and area spending.
Economic Impact Analysis

• Closure of Long Prairie Printing Plant
  – With MN Department of Employment & Economic Development

• Economic Futures programs in Watonwan and McLeod Counties
Land use and recreation sustainability

Study of…

• Northwest Minnesota  
  - Seems distant, but full of opportunity
• Entrepreneurs and land owners

In order to…

• Estimate the current and potential for diversifying the economy through land and recreation uses

Found:

• Policy and cultural changes and education are needed to increase economic activity
Requested by EDDs in Regions 5 & 9

Impacts of local food:

• Community economic impacts of small, community-based enterprises that focus on sourcing produce and value-added products locally

• Positive impacts of local food production
Case Studies of Housing Solutions

• At request of several EDOs
• Interviewing small communities that have found housing solutions
• Describing efforts and reasons for success
• Over 20 communities
• Single family housing, senior housing, TIF projects, home rehab, new developments, …
• Avg pop of 5,132; range from 458 to 14,664
Tourism Workforce

- Survey of resorts
- Heart of Minnesota lake country
- Challenges
- Strategies

Fig. 11: Increased wages to recruit/hire employees (n=44)  
Fig. 12: Increased wages to retain employees (n=41)
Workforce Symposium
Goal: To increase our research base

Topics:
• Migration, housing, child care, education, health care, transportation, people with disabilities, workforce pipeline, future of work
• And more in the discussions

Coming soon to z.umn.edu/workforcesymposium
Workforce Symposium
Goal: To increase our research base

Results:
• Increased awareness of complexity
• New connections between researchers
• New directions
• More involved in community engagement
• Next steps
Thank you
Organizational Chart

EDA Funding

UMN Crookston
Grant Management
Center for Rural Entrepreneurship

Extension
Directorship (current)
Community Economics programming
Keep doing this.

- Economic Impact Analysis
- Consultation with Regional Development Organizations
- Recreation survey in Northwest MN
  - Statewide in 2018
  - Willingness to pay – residents and visitors
  - To improve economic activity
Grow this: Rural Entrepreneurship

Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities conference, fall of 2019

• What’s being done to support and sustain innovation and entrepreneurship?

• Partner – Southern MN Initiative Foundation

• In addition to traditional efforts:
  - Physical spaces and ecosystems
  - Local culture that supports entrepreneurs
  - Fall 2018: Asset mapping and a roundtable with local leaders
Broadband in Indian Country

- Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Reservation
- Aware of availability of high-speed fiber internet connections
- Current technology needs
- How high-speed fiber could affect profitability
Moving this forward

Outreach to North Minneapolis Promise Zone

– EIA on a potential development

– Final stages of hiring an Extension Educator
  • For economic analysis aiming at improving the quality of economic life in North Minneapolis
  • Research and education

New director for the EDA Center

• Located at UM Crookston
With more resources?

- Increase work and expertise in workforce development
- A multi-faceted and statewide issue
  + Population shifts
  + Housing
  + Transportation
  + Child care
  + Health care
  + Training and skills mismatch
  + more
Thank you