

WINTER 2007

VISIONS



A publication of the
Heartland Center for
Leadership Development

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Community
Survival:

Studying Reservation Communities

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Don't
Be Afraid
of the Snow!

**2007
National Academy:
HOMETOWN
COMPETITIVENESS®**

January 9, 10 and 11, 2007

Lincoln, Nebraska



VISIONS
from the
Heartland

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The Heartland Center is
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leadership that responds to
the challenges of the future.

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Helping Small Towns Succeed

For the first time in 15 years, the annual program, Helping Small Towns Succeed, was presented in Nebraska. The Lied Lodge and Conference Center, which is run by the Arbor Day Foundation, proved to be a wonderful site for the training event. The site was an extra added resource for the group and the program included a presentation by Foundation staff in order to explain the design of the conference center and the many other adjacent sustainable agriculture projects on the property.



Participants share small group activities at Lied Lodge and Conference Center.

Milan Wall, Reshell Ray, Kurt Mantonya and Vicki Luther served as faculty. The agenda featured activities around Leadership Development, Clues to Community Survival, Appreciative Inquiry, Diversity as Opportunity, Building Blocks of Community Development, Measurement and Building Social Capital.

One evening also featured a panel discussion on Heritage Tourism by three local experts. Nebraska City is unusual in supporting a shared curator for the nine local

museums in town. Brian Volkmer talked about this unique arrangement and offered many excellent ideas about how to make shared marketing work to the advantage of all attractions in a small town. Pat Friedli discussed her experience as an appointed board member of a city-owned historic home, and Connie Reimers-Hild talked about the Kimmel Education and Research Center's programs to promote heritage ag products.

Participants in Helping Small Towns Succeed all evaluated the program and the facility very favorably. According to Milan Wall, there is strong interest in moving the location of HSTS each year, "this new approach will allow us to reach different regions of the country each year and make access to the program easier for community developers. We hope to have a different site each year."

If you have an interest in bringing this program to your region, contact Carmen Perzinski (cperzinski@heartlandcenter.info). We'd gladly help with marketing and promotion and are very interested in suggestions for good locations and facilities.



Trees provide the backdrop at the Arbor Day facility.

More Successful Town Hall Meetings

If you recall in the Spring 2006 Visions, the Heartland Center reported on "Town Hall Meetings" designed to help rural communities set priorities for improvement and to identify opportunities and aspirations for continued growth. Since the first pilot-tested community of Doniphan that was mentioned in that article, the Town Hall forum has expanded to several additional Nebraska communities. Town Halls have been held in Oxford, Blue Hill, Bertrand, Ravenna, and Hampton, plus a county-wide meeting with the folks in Thayer County who met in Hebron.

The agenda for the Town Hall is simple and is based on the Appreciative Inquiry Approach. The process begins with discovering a past achievement or success in the town and includes discussion that captures the lessons from the success. This is an important feature of the Town Hall agenda since the focus is on appreciating past achievements and really analyzing what can be learned from past success.

The second phase in the Town Hall is to dream the vision of the community in 20-25 years and then create a vision statement for the community. In the design-the-future activity, people are asked to narrow the preferred future down to what they would like to see in 1-2 years. Fine-tuning the time frame to just 2 years gives a focused set of aspirations that can be achieved. Finally, in the last phase, everyone is asked to deliver the results by establishing a task force, setting meeting times and dates, and as well as jotting down some initial activities. All of this is accomplished before the meeting is adjourned for the night.

The agenda for the Town Hall is simple and is based on the Appreciative Inquiry Approach.

Heartland Center staff has also been teaching others about this format. The Town Hall agenda is also part of training in the Center's longest community development program, Helping Small Towns Succeed. In addition, the format was presented at the 2006 Nebraska Community Improvement Program Annual Meeting, attended by community leaders.

If you would like help with prioritizing community improvement programs through this type of Town Hall meeting process, contact Kurt Mantonya at the Center. Kurt can be reached at kmantonya@heartlandcenter.info or by calling 1-800-927-1115.

A sample vision statement created by one group at the Bertrand meeting

Business

keeping and expanding new in community

Evolution

lives turned full circle here

Returning College Grads

reason to come back home

Tireless

attitude to complete projects

Recreation

for all ages

Always Improving

(self explanatory)

New Visions

young people stepping up

Determination

never give up attitude



Participants at the Town Hall meeting in Blue Hill, Nebraska.

Clues to Community Survival: Studying Reservation Communities

Valerie Shangreaux, a Heartland Center board member and long-time associate, recently completed a doctoral program and based her dissertation research on Clues to Community Survival. We asked Valerie to offer our readers a synopsis of how she applied the 20 Clues to the Citizen Potawatomi Nation of central Oklahoma and what she learned from the study.

It takes a whole village to raise a child. The message behind this Omaha proverb is clear. The community as a whole has an effect on the daily lives of the people living there. In order for individuals to thrive, the community must be thriving and resilient. When communities are disrupted, their ability to meet the needs of their members may decline and as a result the community as a whole is impaired.

Historically, Native American communities suffered tremendous disruption. As more and more immigrants arrived on the North American continent, the demand for land grew and grew resulting in warfare and forced removal of Native peoples from their lands. In addition the reservation system altered Native societies and



Valerie Shangreaux

I wanted to know how some Native American communities are coping and even thriving despite historic patterns of oppression that have resulted in present day conditions of poverty and marginalization.

way of life and reduced tribal ability to govern their communities and maintain the well-being of community members. Yet, despite massive and widespread disruptions some Native communities continue to show tremendous resiliency.

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of what promotes Native American community resilience. I wanted to know how some Native American communities are coping and even thriving despite historic patterns of oppression that have resulted in present day conditions of poverty and marginalization.

First, through word of mouth, one community was identified as a possible study site. Next available census data were collected and comparisons were made between the possible study site and other Native communities in the surrounding area and with the total Native population in Oklahoma. The community first identified through word of mouth had higher educational attainment, higher rates of employment, and lower levels of poverty among families, and thus the Citizen Potawatomi Nation was selected for study. In-depth interviews with tribal leaders, members and employees were conducted to learn how the leadership of that community had increased their community's resiliency.

Using Heartland's model for community case study research and analysis as a guide, four broad areas of community were explored:

- 1. Quality of Life**
- 2. Economy**
- 3. Leadership and Citizen Participation**
- 4. Planning for the Future**



The photo above is courtesy of Tom Tidball from his 2002 Pow Wow Plains Exhibition at the Great Plains Art Collection in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Following are some of the highlights of the findings:

Quality of Life

Factors found most important to high quality of life were community connectedness, spirituality, and social support. A sense of community stemmed from the traditional kinship or extended family system, shared history and traditions that reinforced a common cultural identity. Spirituality was also important. Most respondents talked about spirituality in terms of blending traditional Native religion and Christianity. How they practiced their spirituality wasn't as important as the perception that it was a foundation in spirituality that elevated the rest of the community life. Community support was encouraged through the traditional value of giving back. Volunteerism and participation in cultural and other community activities provided opportunity for all community members to take part in and to support the community life of their Nation.

Economy

Perhaps the single most important factor related to the economic resiliency of this Nation is the utilization of revenues from the casino, grocery store and other enterprises as "seed corn" to invest in further diversifying the economic base, increase land holdings, promote further economic opportunities for tribal members and educate the people in order to have members who are ready and able to participate in the quickly growing local economy.

Leadership and Citizen Participation

The beliefs, actions, and characteristics of the governing body emerged as key components of community resiliency. Some of the major characteristics of the leadership were that they were visionary, caring, inclusive, had long term stability, and were business oriented in their approach to running the Nation.

Effective exercise of sovereignty and self-governance were vital to the resiliency of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. Treaty rights are the inherent rights to sovereignty and self-determination that are viewed by the Citizen Potawatomi Nation as sacred and the "fundamental cornerstones" of the government.

Self-reliance, a traditional Native value, is at the core of everything the Citizen Potawatomi Nation does.

Self-reliance, a traditional Native value, is at the core of everything the Citizen Potawatomi Nation does. The guiding philosophy is one of "helping others to help themselves." Per capita payments from the profits off their enterprises are viewed as a "disincentive" to self-reliance. Therefore, funds are used for assisting members in getting a better education, thus being better equipped to find meaningful and substantial employment.

Planning for the Future

Toward attaining self-sufficiency, education is highly valued and supported, from a two-star daycare program to a GED program, to educational programs for employees and other adults. The highlight of the educational efforts with an eye toward the future was the leadership program, which provides a paid, college-credit earning tribal governmental internship experience to young tribal high school and college students.

Learn more about the Citizen Potawatomi Nation by visiting their web site: www.Potawatomi.org. The Nation is the 9th largest recognized tribe in the United States and owns one of Oklahoma's largest grocery stores as well as the First Bank and Trust of Shawnee, a large golf and entertainment complex and many tribal service centers. Their exciting enterprises are also featured on the web site.

Factors found most important to high quality of life were community connectedness, spirituality, and social support.



The illustrations on the cover and above are by Turtle Heart, a member of the Ojibway tribe who lives and works in the Mojave Desert in Southern California where he creates both sculpture and digital art. He is deeply concerned with maintaining the cultural integrity of his own tribe as well as of other American tribes. His art has been reviewed and approved by the tribal elders with whom he confers. He also directs the American Indian Computer Art project at www.aicap.org.



Don't Be Afraid of the Snow! 2007 National Academy: HOMETOWN COMPETITIVENESS®

On January 9, 10 and 11, a National Academy for HomeTown Competitiveness® will be held in Lincoln, Nebraska. The program has been offered in several other states: communities in Colorado, North Dakota, Wyoming, Texas, Kansas, Montana and Michigan have hosted HTC Academies, and the cadre of trained HTC organizers has grown to more than 900.

HTC is the award winning model for small town revitalization developed by the Heartland Center, the Nebraska Community Foundation and the RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship. Over the last several years, the HTC model has motivated small town leaders and professional community developers to new and better community improvement efforts. The approach focuses on four HTC Pillars:

Engaging an increasingly diverse leadership group in the community

Attracting young families and retaining youth

Identifying and supporting local entrepreneurs

Building local charitable assets to fund strategic development projects

At the Academy, participants will learn all the theory basis for the approach, how to manage community steering committee and task force activities in all the Pillar topics, and gain new techniques and strategies from the high level of interaction among faculty and participants.

Academy Format: The Academy is three full days of training in the techniques that have been successful in allowing struggling communities to : (1) expand the leadership capability of their residents, (2) identify and support entrepreneurial enterprises, (3) build or expand a community foundation with new endowments and (4) retain and attract young families to reverse population decline. The general training format is as follows:

Day 1 The HTC Approach

- Introduction and HomeTown Competitiveness Overview

Energizing Entrepreneurs

- Communicating the Case for Entrepreneurship
- Understanding Entrepreneurial Talent
- Asset Mapping for an Entrepreneurial Economy
- Nurturing and Growing Local Entrepreneurs

Day 2 Capturing Wealth Transfer

- The Threat and Opportunity of Wealth Transfer
- Formulating Your Philanthropic Capacity and Goals
- Cultivating Home Grown—Home Given Gifts
- Capturing a Portion of Intergenerational Wealth
- Philanthropic Strategies for Entrepreneurial Support

Engaging and Attracting Young People

- Every Young Person Counts: A Formula for Youth Attraction Goals
- Identifying and Engaging E-Youth
- Attracting Young Families
- Building a Youth Engagement System

Day 3 Mobilizing Leadership

- Strengthening and Diversifying Local Leadership
- Considering Program Approaches
- Developing a Leadership Strategy
- Sustaining Progress and Tracking Results

Applying HTC Back Home

The HTC academy is an intensive and comprehensive overview of the HomeTown Competitiveness framework, which is a strategic approach to rural community development that focuses on four so-called Pillars: Energizing entrepreneurship, capturing wealth transfer, engaging and attracting young people, and strengthening leadership.

HTC is drawing significant attention throughout the nation because rural leaders and practitioners recognize that even the most distressed rural community has, to some degree, each of the necessary elements to launch an HTC initiative. What differentiates HTC from many other development efforts is that it focuses primarily on internal resources and assets. The goal is to assess where a community is, here and now, and to build on the current capacity in each of the four Pillars.

More than 60 participants from 26 Michigan communities attended a three-day HomeTown Competitiveness (HTC) academy in October in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan.

“We expect that HomeTown Competitiveness will be very effective here in Michigan. Its strategies are readily understood by community leaders, and because these are such common sense approaches, citizens and organizations should be enthusiastic about implementation. A number of us are excited about capturing wealth for our foundations and setting goals to retain our youth,” said Allan Hooper of Consumers Energy in Jackson, Michigan. Hooper is a board member of Rural Partners of Michigan, which sponsored the academy.

The HTC academy is designed as a train-the-trainers learning event to share the overall approach as well as many of the tools and resources that are key to community-based implementation of HomeTown Competitiveness. Participants are provided with an HTC “community organizer license” that provides them with permission to guide implementation of the HTC concept in their communities and to order copies of the HomeTown Competitiveness Community Guidebook. The Guidebook is a reference manual for implementation of HTC in a community or multi-community setting.

Since 2002, HTC’s community partnerships have grown from one pilot site in Valley County, Nebraska, to nine communities/counties in Nebraska and several others in Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma. Elements of the approach are also being implemented in a number of other states around the country.

In Michigan, academy participants represented state and local agencies, local and regional governments, community foundations, area development corporations, chambers of commerce, energy companies, tribal agencies and higher education institutions. The academy was held at a cultural center that features the history and heritage of the Great Lakes Anishinabe people.

Resources for Small Town Success Publications of the Heartland Center for Leadership Development

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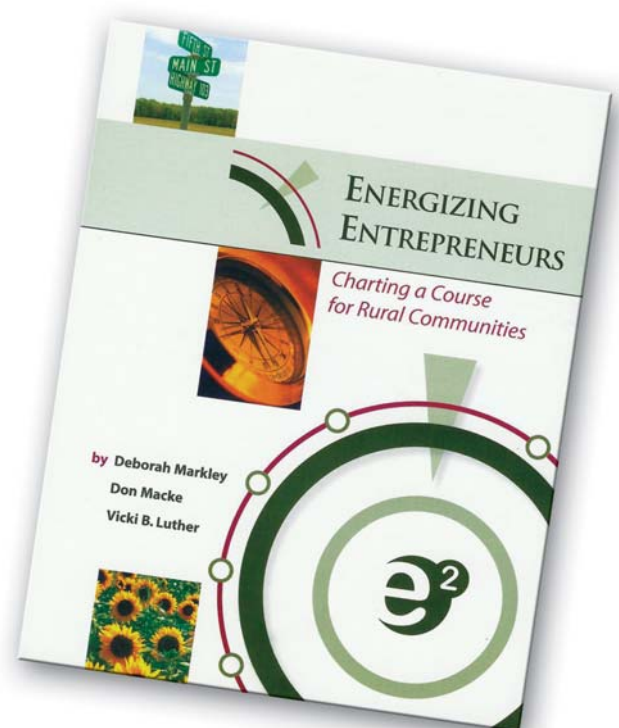
e² Charting a Course for Rural Communities

Mark the Calendar: **June 2007**

Energizing Entrepreneurs, a national training program now in its 4th year, will be offered at the Lied Conference Center in Nebraska City, Nebraska on June 5, 6, 7, and 8. Using the best selling publication as a text, the program will offer a highly interactive agenda that will feature:

- a rural perspective on what entrepreneurs can mean to the local economy
- how to make the case for an entrepreneurship focus
- judging readiness for economic development and entrepreneurship
- building community capacity to get the work done
- influencing policy to support entrepreneurship

Milan Wall, Co-Director of the Heartland center, and Karen Dabson of the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship based in Columbia, Missouri will serve as lead faculty.



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Ask The Heartland Center

Question: We've got two moderately active service clubs in our town and I can't seem to find a way for them to work together on anything. I'd like some ideas on how I might maneuver them into a shared project for the betterment of all.



Kurt Mantonya

Program Associate

Suppose the request for a project came from a credible source and was addressed to both clubs? After all, if the Teen Club or the Senior Center asks for help from both, that might set the stage for a shared project that addresses the need.



Milan Wall

Co-Director

Maybe the first thing to do is to get some other folks on the same page as you so that you're not the only one with this cooperation in

mind. You might try to identify some members of each club that you'd term "champions" of the shared project idea. If you had several members of each club that supported the idea of a shared project, you can make sure that the idea keeps coming up at meetings over time.



Reshell Ray

Project Associate

Finding out some commonality in the missions or purposes of the two service clubs

will help you pick the best project to share. You want to identify any cross over in membership or audience, too. These two elements will be the framework for convincing folks to work on a project together.



Vicki Luther

Co-Director

Sometimes it's best to start sharing projects that are very simple. Exchanging stories in each newsletter, or mailing out a flyer to your members for the other club's event might be

easy ways to start building a history of working together. In fact, if you had a conversation about the past, you might even discover some ways that the two clubs have worked together long ago and make that another reason to go forward with cooperation.