

SPRING 2007

VISIONS


from the
Heartland

A publication of the
Heartland Center for
Leadership Development

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Entrepreneurship
National Institute

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in Action

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at Work

Upcoming Institutes

**Energizing
Entrepreneurship**

June 5-8, 2007

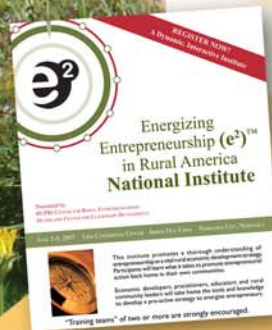
Lied Conference Center
Nebraska City, NE

**Helping
Small Towns Succeed**

Oct 23-25 • Albuquerque, NM

**How One
Farmer Put
Heartland
Center
Training
to Work**

**See Pages
4 & 5**





VISIONS
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Heartland

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The Heartland Center is
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the challenges of the future.

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Energizing Entrepreneurship (e²) in Rural America National Institute

Presented by:

RUPRI CENTER FOR RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

HEARTLAND CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

June 5-8, 2007

Lied Conference Center Arbor Day Farm Nebraska City, Nebraska

This institute promotes a thorough understanding of entrepreneurship as a vital rural economic development strategy. Participants will learn what it takes to promote entrepreneurial action back home in their own communities.

Economic developers, practitioners, educators and rural community leaders will take home the tools and knowledge to develop a pro-active strategy to energize entrepreneurs.

Training Topics

Day 1

- The "magic" of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship
- Making the case for entrepreneurship
- Entrepreneurship as a core economic development strategy
- Entrepreneurs roundtable and dinner

Day 2

- Asset mapping in your community
- Understanding and targeting "e" talent
- Youth entrepreneurship
- Dinner on your own

Day 3

- The entrepreneurial environment
- Entrepreneurship development systems
- Building your game plan
- BBQ dinner and celebration

Day 4

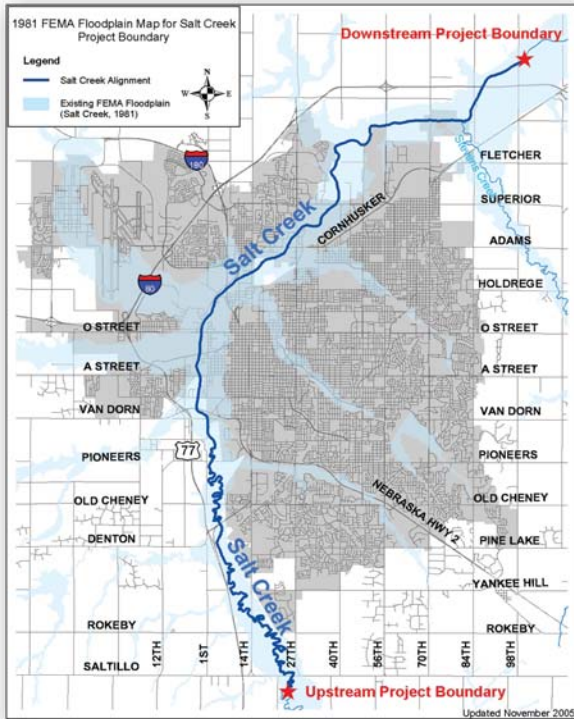
- Articulating next steps
- Team presentations
- Lunch and adjournment

Registration

For more information and registration, call the Heartland Center at
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Public Process in Action: The Salt Creek Mapping Project

The Heartland Center facilitated a long-term public participation program for the City of Lincoln's re-mapping of the Salt Creek Floodplain. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is undertaking a comprehensive, multi-year initiative to update aging flood hazard maps nationwide. This initiative, known as the Map Modernization Program, will provide up-to-date digital flood hazard data for communities across the country. As part of this federal program, FEMA partnered with the City of Lincoln and the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District to develop more accurate information regarding the flood prone areas for various streams and channels.

Tips for Success in Public Participation

- Ask and ask often, who's not here? This will help to maintain good representation of the folks who bear most of the impact.
- Use a variety of techniques to communicate.
- Make sure to translate highly technical information so that everyone can understand what's being said.
- Create special opportunities to participate through alternate times for presentations and targeted work sessions.
- Use more than one medium—print, electronic, speakers bureau, etc.
- At public events use common sense and good design to create a friendly atmosphere that makes people comfortable not confrontational.
- A single point of contact that directs questions to the right responder helps citizens negotiate the maze of official departments.

The Heartland Center joined the team of consultants with the task of designing and managing the participation of property owners in the area. Not only was there a very strong need for public education about modernizing the floodplain map, there was also an equally strong need for residents to offer their ideas, share concerns and comments. "This program really highlights the fact that all public participation has to involve two way communications," offered Milan Wall, Heartland Center Co-Director. He added, "Our staff was responsible for making sure that the technical information was translated and presented in ways that could easily be understood and that information could be received in an equally significant manner." Salt Creek bisects the City of Lincoln, a project boundary of 900 square miles with 31 actual river miles. With a project scope this large and potentially contentious, public participation was critical.

The participation process involved designing and conducting three open houses. The first was held in March 2005 and included introduction to the process, goals and objectives. The second open house in October 2005 presented the draft floodplain and floodway boundaries. The last open house, held in December 2006, presented the floodplain and floodway boundaries with FEMA review comments and the potential adoption of a companion ordinance. At each event, several information stations were arranged in the meeting room so that after a presentation and overview, visitors could select the topic to visit and decide exactly how much time they would spend with the staff at the station. These events were also scheduled to make attendance easy. Typically a program would be offered at 5:30 p.m. and then repeated at 7 p.m. In this way, citizens could choose to stop by after work or take the time later after the evening meal.

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Vicki Luther, left, at display.

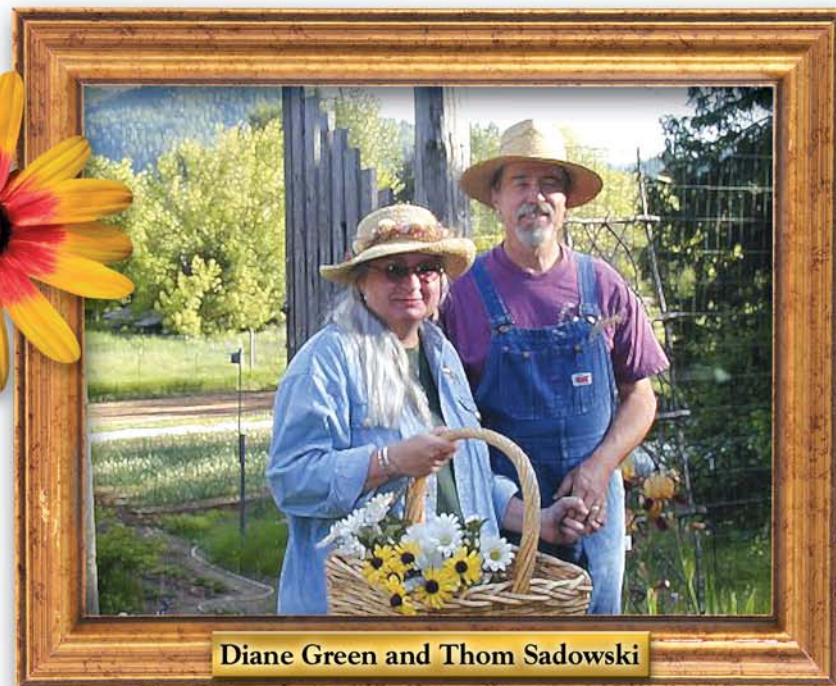


Landowners get to zoom in on their property at a laptop information station.

Leadership Skills at Work: a visit with Diane Green



How do you combine leadership skills with an entrepreneurial spirit and devotion to farming? Take a look at how one graduate of the Helping Small Towns Succeed Institute put new skills and ideas to work in her own business setting. Greentree Naturals is a successful venture in sustainable, small farm agriculture. Diane Green, along with husband Thom Sadowski, uses all her skills and ideas to develop this remarkable teaching and learning business. That business has been built from a farm that is as much a lifestyle choice as a thriving market garden.



Diane Green and Thom Sadowski

You attended the Center's Helping Small Towns Succeed Institute a few years back. How have you used that training?

Thom and I have shared an idea about the lifestyle and farm we wanted. This involves agriculture that is sustainable and a business that deals with helping folks understand where their food comes from. I am a farmer by trade and had never had any training in leadership development until that workshop. Getting involved in the sustainable ag community led to experiences that have taken us far beyond the farm.

So, the skills I learned from attending Helping Small Towns Succeed have been useful in situations from planning meetings, designing Leadership Team and Board of Director retreats and work sessions to most recently developing and facilitating a Women in Sustainable Ag Retreat. I refer to the training manual often and will be forever grateful to have this in my toolbox. Over time, I have used everything from the workshop and manual. Dealing with difficult people, strategic planning, the getting to know you exercise, and survival skills process have all been useful.

How did the task of creating and publishing "how to" books develop for you?

When we first started selling to restaurants, I couldn't find anything that was helpful and figured this was happening to other small acreage farmers, so I developed *Selling Produce to Restaurants: A Marketing Guide for Small Acreage Growers*. Invitations to teach workshops began to come in and I felt that the information should be available to everyone. The Heartland Center helped with editing and printing. Several years later, we offered a second edition and sold over a thousand copies across the US, Canada and Europe.

The apprenticeship program that you offer sounds great. Where did that idea come from?

There have been on-farm apprenticeships across the country for many years but I had never considered one until I met a couple of young women at our farmers market. They had traveled here and paid a fee to apprentice at a farm but were treated poorly. The farmer just used them as laborers and didn't provide an educational component. I just decided that something needed to be done to educate the next generation of small acreage farmers.



Harvesting zinnias at the farm in northern Idaho.



Participants enjoy an organic walk in the Idaho countryside.



Diane teaching a sustainable ag class.

I just decided that something needed to be done to educate the next generation of small acreage farmers.

We developed an educational curriculum for our farm, and then I started working with the University of Idaho and Washington State University to teach others how to do this. Greentree Naturals can offer college credits with our apprenticeship. We've had 15 apprentices in the last 10 years.

From your viewpoint, what's the biggest obstacle to real community involvement in sustainable agriculture?

No one seems to ever have the time to do as much as they would like to do for the causes they support. For our community to be involved with sustainable agriculture, people must prepare fresh food from the farm which, of course, can take much more time than fast food.

We open our farm for events during the summer so that people can come and learn about what an organic farm and sustainable agriculture is all about. Every time a new person comes to the farm, they either ask to sign up for our Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) or they start shopping at the farmers market!

What about the retreat that you facilitated recently?

The retreat focused on Women in Sustainable Agriculture and I organized and facilitated the event. The idea came from email conversations



Summer workshop activities are varied at Greentree Naturals.

about women as the "New American Farmers." We wanted to empower women and to create a network within our region as a support system. Twenty women of all ages attended. Four of our past apprentices and the chef that we work with for our on-farm events also participated, which made it all the more special for me.

I used many techniques that I learned from the Heartland Center leadership training and was so

grateful that the materials were right here for me as I planned the retreat. We even did some asset mapping of skills and resources within the group. We're talking about another gathering later this year after the growing season is finished.

More information about Greentree Naturals and the many on-farm programs that Diane and Thom have developed can be found at their web site: www.greentreenaturals.com.

Blueprint COMMUNITIES at work

The Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh is now offering the same training program in West Virginia that proved so successful in Pennsylvania last year. The FHLBank Pittsburgh, which serves Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Delaware, contracted with the Heartland Center in 2005 to develop a curriculum and deliver training that would help teams of community leaders create strategic plans and make good use of the many resources available through the bank and other programs and agencies. "It's a wonderful opportunity for us to design and deliver this high quality training. Seeing the impact in Pennsylvania was really inspiring," according to Co-Director Vicki Luther.

Ten communities have been selected for the program in West Virginia from the 26 that applied. Each team includes a banker, an elected official and representatives of community institutions such as churches, schools and hospitals. The communities participating include: Anstead, Fairmont-Southside, Gilmore County, McDowell County, Mullens, Ritchie County, St. Albans, Salem, Shinnston and Williamson.

The program, which is called "West Virginia Rising" was officially opened March 12 by Governor Joe Manchin. The announcement ceremony also saw the debut of a new folk song of the same name written and performed by Larry Groce, a well known performer in the state.

Heartland Center co-directors will serve as the lead trainers with longtime associate Peter Hille of the Brushy Fork Institute on the trainer team. The training program began in April in Beckley, West Virginia and the teams will convene again in May and September. Those teams that complete a strategic plan will be given access to ongoing technical assistance and a variety of funders. In addition, each community will receive



Songwriter Larry Groce performs.

"It's a wonderful opportunity for us to design and deliver this high quality training. Seeing the impact in Pennsylvania was really inspiring."

Co-Director Vicki Luther



Governor Joe Manchin opens the program.



Networking at the ceremony among community leaders.

a data-based community profile and a matching mini-grant for project implementation.

For the FHLBank Pittsburgh, the decision to bring the program to West Virginia was easy, based on the success of the 22 communities that completed the training program in Pennsylvania. More information about the program can be found at: www.blueprintcommunities.com.



FHLBank COO Bill Batz, left, helps kick off Blueprint Communities.



Blueprint Communities teams are introduced.

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Public Process in Action: The Salt Creek Mapping Project *continued from page 3*



Open House participant asks questions.

Besides the use of traditional open houses, other public input techniques were utilized. A series of five stakeholder meetings was scheduled to discuss the draft maps. The purpose of these meetings was to answer questions from groups that shared similar concerns. For example, stakeholder groups such as homeowner associations and neighborhood associations were invited to briefings on potential impacts to property in their areas.

A speakers' bureau of staff from the Natural Resources District and the City of Lincoln with special expertise was organized. A special overview presentation was developed and promoted to service clubs, schools and associations. The purpose of this presentation was to raise the level of understanding among persons impacted by the mapping update. A web site was developed as another source of information. Throughout the process, the Heartland Center served as a single source of contact for the public, which helped direct inquiries to the right technical experts. In this way, citizens didn't have to make multiple phone calls before finding the right person to answer questions.

Controversy in any land use project is always right around the corner. Highly technical information and dealing with large federal agencies can make information exchange very difficult. One aspect of this participation project was

the use of a variety of techniques to share information so that while the message stayed the same, the delivery mechanism varied.

Measuring success for such a large project can prove to be difficult. It is easy to count the number of people who attended the public participation events and review comments left at these venues. But in this case, the Salt Creek Mapping Project success can also be gauged in the unanimous passage of the companion ordinance related to using the new FEMA standards, which would allow the floodway to stay within the banks of levees already in existence. This companion ordinance met with the unanimous approval of the Lancaster County Planning Commission. There was no public opposition at all to the ordinance further signifying a strong success with regard to public participation and keeping everyone informed.

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