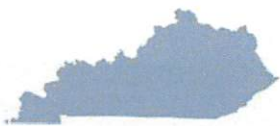


Stronger Economies Together: Regional Successes

Stronger Economies Together (SET) enables communities and counties across rural America to work together in developing and implementing an economic development blueprint for their multi-county region that strategically builds on the current and emerging economic strengths of that region. Creating, attracting and retaining jobs as a single rural county, in isolation from other nearby counties, is becoming increasingly ineffective. In today's global marketplace, economic development progress is more likely to be realized when rural counties—often in partnership with one or more metro counties—work together as a region to assess, design, and implement plans that build on their assets and comparative economic strengths. This summary highlights some notable accomplishments of SET regions that have implemented economic development plans

<i>Regional Set Impact Indicators</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>States Reporting</i>
Number of newly formed regional planning teams	30	28
Number of organizations engaged in regional planning teams	1,543	28
Number of regional economic development plans developed	16	11
Dollar value of grants and resources leveraged/generated by communities	\$ 111,944,222.00	16

SET Accomplishments



Kentucky - The Kentucky Highlands Stronger Economies Together Team identified the healthcare cluster as important economic driver in the 22-county region in Southeast Kentucky. Through a grant award, the project coordinator surveyed 600 healthcare providers in the region and with the SET partner team has identified specific objectives and activities to further this work. The team is now actively pursuing funds for implementation and was recently designated.



Missouri - The Old Trails Regional Tourism Partnership hosts an annual economic development summit and has established an active committee structure consisting of a Finance Committee, Marketing Committee, Education Committee and Membership Committee. The Partnership applied for and was awarded a Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) of \$49,500 in Fiscal Year 2013 to hire an executive director to connect the regional economic assets and developed cooperative tourism marketing to create opportunities for small and emerging businesses, in the nine county regions.



North Carolina - The Sandhills Stronger Economies Together planning effort has resulted in the launch of the Green Fields Initiative, a three-pronged plan to support agriculture and agriculture business in the region. Strategies include trainings in marketing, business planning, alternative business structures, succession planning, the creation of a food hub, and encouraging niche revenue streams and alternative crop production. The end goal is to build stronger economies by raising the profile of the agriculture and timber industries so that they are widely recognized as being critical and essential economic drivers by local and regional policymakers, politicians, community and business leaders, and others.



Nevada - In November 2013 WNDD was awarded \$5,000 from SET National to produce a Food Regulatory Roadmap through the SET Agribusiness Workgroup, assisting growers and small producers in the Region to market products locally. In January 2014 WNDD was awarded \$5,000 from the Nevada Governor's Office of Energy to produce ten videos featuring the use of alternative energy in rural areas of the SET Region. The grant will be used to fund a competition among 8-12 grade students to produce these videos. In March 2014 the Carson City Convention and Visitors Authority volunteered to print trail maps produced by the local BLM Office, which were distributed at a SET Tourism Workgroup meeting. In April 2014 members of the SET Infrastructure Workgroup met with the California Transportation Commission to share information about Trans Sierra Transportation planning efforts that included activities of mutual interest to local jurisdictions within the SET Region, establishing a goal to produce a comprehensive planning document, incorporating local plans and activities taking place in both Nevada and California.



New Mexico - The four-county Southwest New Mexico Economic Development Partnership and seven-county Northeast Economic Development Stronger Economies Together (SET) teams identified rural broadband as a key economic asset needed for the future economic growth of their rural communities. As a first step towards achieving their goal, the SET teams have been selected to participate in the New Mexico Broadband Program (NMBBP) regional broadband pilot program. The SET teams will receive technical assistance to develop a solid planning, funding and technology strategy to bring affordable broadband to their regions



Virginia – The four-county Northern Neck Chesapeake Bay Region Partnership has been energized by new partners as a result of the SET process. Since the conclusion of SET, the region was awarded a Building Collaborative Communities grant from the VA Department of Housing & Community Development to assist in creating an entrepreneurial ecosystem and to support regional branding efforts. A follow-on grant from the Building Entrepreneurial Economies program of the VA Department of Housing & Community Development was awarded in March 2014 to plan a nano loan program to provide access to capital for small businesses. This collaborative effort produced the first business incubator in the region, which opened in May 2014.



Washington - The Mid-Columbia Economic Development District, Washington State University, and other regional partners are working together on a IMCP planning project that includes an assessment of key information about industry markets (capacity, potential for regional manufacturing, etc.) and regional forums to explore expanding opportunities in the Value-Add Agriculture/Food Processing, Energy Efficiency; Composites Materials; and Unmanned Aircraft Systems expansion opportunities clusters. In addition, a recent WSU internally—funded small business assistance project, Ready, Set, Grow a Business, will focus on IMCP—identified industries in this five-county WA-OR region to help leverage the effort.

“Before SET, [the regional teams] viewed the world of economic development as a zero-sum game: my loss is your gain. SET has changed that attitude. Cooperation is no longer a dirty word.”

<http://srdc.msstate.edu/set/>

