

Community and Economic Development

Critical Issue #1: Fostering Economic Diversity

- Recognize urban/rural interdependence
- Encourage better long-range thinking (e.g., location of rest stops)
- Small business development and retention for youth and adults
- Connecting statewide economic opportunities and plans with willing rural participants
- Educate urban legislators about issues that are relevant to rural populations. Urban legislators don't think the economic health of rural areas are important to them and the urban communities they represent.
- Economic research so data available to measure economic health of (rural) communities.

Comments:

- *None*

Critical Issue # 2: Building Sustainable Communities

- Communication infrastructure
- Connectivity (internet, mobile, fiber optics)
- Infrastructure development and maintenance
- Training programs for developing local leadership
- Education programs to help people engage in community issues and participate in civil discourse
- Create viable health care systems
- Deal with ex-urban sprawl and the urban/rural interface
- Teaching the social action process to Extension professionals
- Identify funding issues for maintaining rural schools
- Create imaginative solutions for rural schools/diminished student populations

Comments:

- *Web connectivity and IT infrastructure*
- *Distance education → K-12*

Critical Issue #3: Workforce Development

- Workforce development
- Identify traditional industries that may be lost in the near-future
- Improving educational systems that result in 100% high school graduation rates
- Youth education (STEM literacy)

Comments:

- *Distance education opportunities with 4-year institutions*
- *Competition between high paying jobs (energy industry) and furthering education*
- *Rural communities need the help*

Public Lands

- Identify impacts of public land use policies on rural communities
- Research economic data regarding the effect of transferring federal land to states
- Public land management and recreation