

Beyond the Borders

COMMUNITY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT and LEADERSHIP NEWSLETTER

Issue Four- March, 2001

Building Communities

"Practical Tools and Information"

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This newsletter is meant to share with you practical tools and information to assist you in your important role in community and economic development work. We welcome comments on current letters plus encourage your advice for future articles. Kathy.

Newsletter Topics

Editorial	Facilitation 101 - Part 4	Land Use - The Rural/Urban Conflict	Starting Your Food Business in North Dakota	Alternative Enterprise and Rural Tourism Workshop- UPDATE
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The Rush to the Country

Editorial

Last week we received a letter from our local zoning board. This is the kind of envelope that makes you worry a little. You know that inside there is a letter which is informing you of a public hearing to change the zoning on a nearby piece of land from agriculture to residential. I'm not against growth, but I am against unplanned growth and growth without effective citizen input. And yes, to be perfectly honest, I prefer my agriculture environment. But that's a different topic.

Public hearings are held for proposed zoning changes. As residents of a community, it is our responsibility to participate. However, public hearings on zoning changes can be more emotional than factual, thereby decreasing the effectiveness of the presenters. Speakers for and against a proposed change must be able to present facts in an organized

and concise fashion. Following are five steps that are recommended by the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service for effective public hearing presentations:

- Remember what your audience wants, expects, and needs.
- Clearly define your main ideas.
- Organize your thoughts.
- Choose appropriate style and language.
- Make sure you are familiar with the subject matter.

The commission or board is not a judicial body, however, their job is to weigh evidence. They must consider all relevant information to make the best possible decision for the entire community. This means that it is very important to understand that what the members of the commission need to hear are FACTS. The more factual information they have the more informed and better the decision will be.

The best way to take control of a community's future is to realize that the decisions we make today will affect us tomorrow. Broad-based citizen participation in land use and community planning is one step to make sure that the future we get is the future we want. So, I encourage you to get involved, whether for or against, the next time your community is considering a land use change.

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Facilitation 101

Part 4 - The Meeting

You, the facilitator, are responsible for opening and closing the discussion. In order to do that:

Introduce the specific question for discussion. Be sure to phrase the question to invite input from all sides. For a question to be discussed rationally and creatively, it needs to be stated in a problem-solving context. Therefore.....

- Be open ended
 - Avoid giving a solution
 - Leave room for community and individual values to be part of the answer
 - Create a friendly environment
- o Practice good listening

- o Be open to all ideas
- o Build on those ideas
- o Make sure not to criticize

Running the meeting:

- Monitor and encourage communication and participation
- Continuously clarify and verify what is said by restating, summarizing, providing transitions and questioning
- Ensure ground rules are enforced, maintain fairness; protect participants from personal attack
- Recognize and redirect disruptive behavior
- Make sure participants are physically comfortable
- Refrain from giving personal opinions
- Keep a public record
- Track and take care of side issues
- Maintain a positive group atmosphere

Avoid:

- * Lengthy comments
- * Giving verbal rewards for good answers
- * Asking leading questions
- * Asking loaded questions, using value terms such as "good", "evident", "clear"
- * Using a "know it all" tone of voice
- * Preparing a response before you hear the whole statement or question

Closing the Meeting:

- Review ideas and decisions
- Tie up any loose ends or side issues
- Review participant tasks for the next meeting
- Review deadlines
- Set next meeting and review purpose and agenda
- Evaluate

Following Up:

- Organize minutes
- Send minutes to coordinator for review and distribution

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The Rural / Urban Conflict

Source: Rick Chase, Ag & Natural Resources Educator and Scott Hutcheson, Community Development Specialist, Prudue University Cooperative Extension Service

Nationally more and more people are selling their urban and suburban homes and moving to the country. An article in Time Magazine reported that rural areas have had a net inflow of 2 million Americans this decade. By contrast, rural areas in the 1980's had a net loss of 1.4 million people. The result is that many rural counties are growing again after years of decline.

People move for various reasons but the top reasons for moving to the country are escape from the city, rural character, cheaper housing, opportunity to work at home and industry relocation.

This move to country may create a "clash of the cultures." This happens even in North Dakota communities. Common complaints of farmers include increased amounts of trash and litter in fields and pastures, unleashed dogs disrupting or even killing livestock, trespassing, increased traffic, noise and the amount of increased vandalism to buildings, fences, and equipment. Non-farm neighbors' concerns usually deal with day to day operations of farming like noisy equipment such as tractors, grain dryers, and trucks; dusty conditions from planting and harvesting, farm chemicals, odors associated with livestock operations, and the inevitable wide, slow-moving farm equipment moving up and down roads.

Farmers and non-farmers have different ways of viewing their surroundings. Understanding this and actively working on building bridges and relationships in the community is the responsibility of all who live there. It's not easy but is vital to working through the rural/urban conflict. Everyone can enjoy the benefits of rural life if the stakeholders are willing to come together to deal with common problems.

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Starting Your Food Business in North Dakota

*An Entrepreneur's Guide by the NDSU Institute for Business & Industry Development
Principle Investigator: Julie Garden-Robinson, PhD, Food and Nutrition Specialist,
NDSU Extension Service*

This is a great new resource for anyone considering starting a small food processing business in North Dakota. Sections of the directory include Business How To's, Rules and Regulations, Food Safety and Quality Control, Testing and Labeling, and Low Acid and Acidified Foods. The directory is available on the web at

<http://www.ag.ndsu.nodak.edu/cdfs/foodent/entrprn.htm>.

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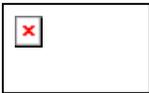
Second Annual Alternative Enterprise and Rural Tourism Workshop

The Second Annual "Enhancing Income thru Alternative Enterprises and Rural Tourism Workshop" will be held on March 30, from 8 am to 3:30 pm at the Edinburg Community Center. One of this year's guest speakers will be Jim Maetzold, the national spokesperson for USDA's Alternative Enterprise and Agritourism efforts. Other guest speakers include Kent Gustafson, University of Minnesota Extension Service, Linda Sprung, Manitoba Agriculture Department, Russ Stubbles, South Dakota State University, Mike Jacobs, Grand Forks Herald and Joanne Burke, Deputy Director of the North Dakota Department of Tourism.

If you own an alternative enterprise business, or are thinking of starting a new rural tourism business venture, please plan on attending this informative workshop!

For further information regarding this workshop, please contact Paul Wellman of Cavalier, the Coordinator for the Red River Resource, Conservation and Development (RC & D) Council. Paul can be reached at his Grafton office - 701-352-0127, or else via e-mail at grafrcd@nd.usda.gov.

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