

# 2018 Impact:

## Community Vitality





## Forging Partnerships that Lead to Vibrant Communities

The SDSU Extension Community Vitality Team and the community of DeSmet hosted the Energize! Exploring Innovative Rural Communities Conference on May 8-9, 2018.

The event was held in downtown De Smet businesses. Shop owners and managers shared their entrepreneurial journeys, while speakers and presenters shared their experiences and knowledge on a variety of topics: Funding for Community Projects, Entrepreneurial Experiences, Agritourism and Value Added Agriculture, and Engaging Community Members. The combination was powerful, with all groups learning from each other. The conference was attended by 110 people, of which 10 resided in De Smet.

The Community Vitality team found, via a survey, that the Energize! Conference had just over an \$18,000 economic impact for the Community of De Smet. The dollars generated from this event are brought in from outside the area... that means new money circulating within De Smet.







## Communities

South Dakota communities are becoming more diverse. SDSU Extension Community Vitality had the opportunity to work with the Karen population in Huron, SD. The Community Vitality team sought ways to culturally adapt programming for the Karen people. The Karen group formed the Karen Association of Huron South Dakota. The Community Vitality team was able to connect the new association with 4-H resources for the Karen youth. The 4-H connection led to an invitation of the Karen youth to perform their traditional dancing on the 4-H stage during the 2018 State Fair.

## Organizations

Communities seeking to understand impacts of community initiatives have an evaluation tool at their disposal. Ripple Effects Mapping can be deployed with community groups. In 2018 twelve communities wanted to document the work of their wellness coalitions. Ripple Effect Mapping was conducted in Kyle, Martin, Lakota Homes (Rapid City), Parmalee, Herreid, Elk Point, Lower Brule, Fort Thompson, Wagner, Dupree, McLaughlin and Lake Andes. The process energizes the community as they reflect on all the impacts that have happened in the community.



## Funding Community Projects: Keeping Healthcare in Your Community

The number of rural hospital closures has increased significantly in recent years. This trend is expected to continue, raising questions about the impact the closures will have on access to health care services in rural communities (Wishner, Solleveld, Rudowitz, Paradise, and Antonisse, July 2016). Wishner, J., Solleveld, P., Rudowitz, R., Paradise, M., and Antonisse, L. (July 2016). A look at Rural Hospital Closures and Implications for Access to care: Three Case Studies. The Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured.



Faulton's hospital was getting old. Something had to be done or it would be lost. In a community of 750 people, it might seem that options were few, but not to Vern Hanson and his colleagues. To see a new hospital with clinic attached and nursing home across the street shows that "big dreams in a small town" can become a reality.



## Inspiring Leaders Across South Dakota

From communities and organizations to businesses and individuals, SDSU Extension Community Vitality works with many different kinds of leaders in South Dakota. The most intense leadership experience we were a part of in 2018 was the Bush Foundation sponsored “SD Change Network.” This cohort experience is based on content learning and application in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion. This group of fourteen members finished Cohort #1 in October, with Cohort #2 beginning with seventeen participants in September. Led by four women connected with National Art Strategies, SDSU Community Vitality was chosen as the on-the-ground advisor to the cohorts. Kari O’Neill assists with interviewing and selecting cohort members, provides connection points for participants, and assists with planning and carrying out in-depth convenings three times per year. Cohort members are currently working on a wide variety of projects to make positive change in our state.

Demkota Ranch Beef in Aberdeen was looking for a way to train their supervisors in skills they needed to lead their plant teams successfully. They chose “Inspiring Leaders” classes for 48 hours of training in topics such as Personality Styles, Differences in Generations and Cultures, Leading Successful Teams, Emotional Intelligence, Ethical Leadership, Conflict Management and Critical Thinking. Human Resource Director, Kelley Lopez said, “This is just what our supervisors needed. They know their role in processing beef, but they need skills in leading their teams and building relationships to retain employees.”

Strategic planning and facilitating topics such as “Building Partnerships” are other ways Community Vitality teaches leadership skills. Entities that we worked with in 2018 included the community of Wall, Partnership with Native Americans, Dakota Fresh Food Hub, SD Grasslands Coalition, SD Soil Health Coalition and SD Society for Range Management.







## Agritourism

SDSU Extension Community Vitality and the SD Dept. of Tourism joined together to form a work group to foster the growth and promotion of agritourism in South Dakota. In addition to representatives from these two organizations, participants joined from SD Value Added Ag, SD Dept. of Agriculture, SD Bed & Breakfast Owners, SD Specialty Producers, USDA Rural Development, Southeast Tech Horticulture Department and Sioux Falls Visitors Bureau.

The SD Agritourism Work Group participated with booths at Dakotafest, the Local Foods Conference, SD Tourism Conference and Value Added Ag Day at the State Fair. Survey information collected from farm and ranch operators to date indicate that about 70% of farm and ranch operators are interested in learning more about agritourism opportunities, not only as a way to add income to their operation, but as a way to educate consumers about the ag industry. We also surveyed operators about what they need to know to establish an agritourism enterprise and responses ranged from ideas that visitors want to customer service to liability to marketing and many more.

In May, a conference participant approached the SDSU Extension Community Vitality team and proposed the exploration of creating an agritourism trail in South Dakota along Highway 14. As a result, we have since formed a Highway 14 Agritourism Trail Steering Committee made up primarily of farm and ranch operators along Highway 14 and plan to help them develop plans and activities for agritourism enterprises.

Peggy Schlechter facilitated a discussion with participants in two beefSD classes about adding a “side gig” to their operation and a majority of the discussion focused on agritourism opportunities. In addition to sharing ideas and showing interest, they had the same concerns about knowledge of operation an agritourism venture as the operators that have completed the survey.

### Agritourism and Value-Added Agriculture/Legacy of a Tired Old Barn and 40 Acres

During a session from the recent Energize! Conference, Julie Ross and her husband, Bill, gave a summary of their business, Good Roots Farm and Gardens, which is located near Brookings, SD. The couple’s adventure into organic and wood-fire pizzas with home-grown ingredients, has moved their business to become a small event destination for hosting all kinds of events. Energize Conference participants that attended the Ross’s session learned a bit of what it takes to become an agritourism business by adding value to your homestead.





## Small Business Basics

According to the Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy, small businesses make up 64% of net new private-sector jobs. Since small business owners create the majority of all new jobs in the United States, developing entrepreneurs and growing small businesses are two of the most effective ways to create jobs. Entrepreneurship generates economic outcomes such as greater production, earnings, wealth, and jobs. Small businesses are important to South Dakota's economy, employing nearly 60% of the private workforce.

When young people perceive a lack of opportunity in their rural community, they often seek opportunities elsewhere. Creating an environment that supports entrepreneurship, which in turn increases business opportunities, is a way to reduce population decline and perhaps attract newcomers to a community or a region.

We help communities create an environment favorable to entrepreneurship growth. Our Small Business Basics program connects entrepreneurs to resources to help them succeed and add to community economic development. Individual classes are customized to the needs of the community, organization or business. Small Business Basics is a workshop series designed to help entrepreneurs and existing business owners create or update their business & marketing plan. In 2018, a total of 10 people from Deadwood, Lead and Central City participated. Once the class was completed, participants responded to the following questions:

- *After completing this class, how likely are you to complete or update your business plan?*  
**86% Very Likely, 14% Maybe**
- *After completing this class, are you more confident about your ability to write a high-quality business plan?*  
**100% Yes**
- *After completing this class, how likely are you to execute this business plan (i.e. start or expand your business, improve your current operations or seek financing/investors)?* **86% Very Likely, 14% Maybe**
- *Would you recommend these classes to others?* **100% Yes**

### Comments from participants included:

*"This class has helped me to positively move forward in my goals. This opportunity helped me wrap my head around the steps to complete my business plan. I'd definitely recommend this to anyone interested in becoming a business owner." ~Cortnee Schmidt*

*"This class is a well thought-out, well planned, professionally executed 'one stop shop' for answering dozens of questions. This class opens your eyes and provides answers to questions you probably didn't even know to ask."*  
~Jason Mook

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