

University of Florida/IFAS 2002

Community Development Program Report and Plan Of Work

National Goal: *Goal 5: Enhanced economic opportunity and quality of life for Americans.* Empower people and communities, through research-based information and education, to address economic and social challenges facing our youth, families, and communities.

National Goal Themes: Communications Skills, Community Development, Conflict Management, Home-based Business Education, Impact of Change on Rural Communities, Jobs/Employment, Leadership Training and Development, Promoting Business Programs, Supplemental Income Strategies, Tourism, and Workforce Preparation

Major Program Objectives:

To improve the well-being of Floridians by: (1) enhancing community economic vitality through developing a cadre of local leaders who will focus on community uniqueness, resources and potential; (2) analyzing demographic, social and economic attributes of communities to help leaders and residents better understand their strengths and weaknesses and opportunities for economic development; (3) building human capacity of urban and rural residents for participation in labor force and entrepreneurial activities; and (4) improving the ability of local leaders to conduct the process of establishing informed public policy through issues education.

Summary of Educational Activities for Clientele:

Programmatic efforts were focused on five content areas: 1) Business retention and expansion, 2) New business development, 3) Workforce development, 4) Leadership development, and 5) Economic impact analysis. The first two contribute directly to development of the local economy, while the fourth content area helps community leaders make more informed decisions on locally-relevant issues. In each content area, only a few counties participated and the impact of these efforts is described elsewhere in this report. Community development activities also included ones that were unique to a county, such as enterprise zone designation, clam farming leases and business recruitment.

Business Retention and Expansion

Studies have shown that 40 to 90 percent of new job growth comes from existing businesses. Enterprise Florida says that 80 % of instate job growth comes from existing businesses. Recognizing this, Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) programs seek to promote a healthy local economy by focusing on existing businesses. The program promotes job growth by helping communities identify concerns and barriers to the survival and growth of local businesses. The Cooperative Extension BR&E program is designed to provide specific technical assistance to a local community. State specialists, certified in the BR&E process, assist a community with all aspects of a BR&E program including survey design, data analysis, report writing and preparation of recommendations to support existing business development.

County Extension Directors in District 1 were trained on opportunities for BRE and Community Economic Development programs. Team member Hank Cothran was

approved as an instructor in the Business Retention and Expansion Certification Curriculum and he taught the BRE Consultant Certification class in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Memphis, Tennessee, New Orleans, LA and Biloxi, MS. A total of 73 people were certified as BRE consultants as a result of the training.

Initiated a BRE program in Citrus County. This program is currently in the recommendation implementation phase. As a part of this program, a local leadership team (5 people) and task force (30 people) as well as 50 individuals who served as volunteer visitors to local businesses were trained. Together these people visited 104 businesses in Citrus County. Based on the business visitations, a final report with 25 recommendations was prepared. Community leaders adopted all the recommendations and are implementing the recommendations in a priority order.

Initiated a BRE program in Sumter County. Trained a local leadership team and task force in their responsibilities in carrying out a BRE Visitation program. Trained local volunteers to conduct business visits. Business visits began in late 2002.

BR&E programs were completed in Collier, Hendry, Glades, Bradford and Madison Counties in 2001. Data analysis and reports were completed for Collier, Hendry, Glades, and Bradford Counties and work to implement recommendations continued through 2002. In Collier County, 15 BRE visitation task force members worked with 13 board and staff members of ECEZ Alliance, 7 Harvest for Humanity, and 5 Immokalee Foundation Beneficiary Committee members (total of 40 community leaders) on the three community issues in Immokalee. For example, the ECEZ Alliance has enhanced grassroots leadership through election of board members and expansion of community partners, and use of BREV task forces to 1) job training: Presented vocational education needs to school board and then helped add ten new programs and increased enrollment by 46%. 2) Housing: funded homeownership counseling conducted Housing Fair and began infrastructure on 26 homes in Eagle Ridge Community.

As a result of completed BR&E visitation programs in 2001-2002, over 100 persons completed training for the local leadership team (Table 1). Many also were trained to conduct face-to-face interviews of firm owners or managers and they collected information from over 400 businesses employing 17,000 workers.

Table 1. Business Retention & Expansion Program Outcomes, 2001-2002.

County	Number trained for BR&E leadership team	Number trained for business visitation	Number of businesses visited	Number of employees at visited firms	Number of issues for follow-up
Collier	25	30	99	2,700	5
Bradford	16	25	66	4,800	6
Glades	15	0	72	550	6
Hendry	20	30	75	1,752	6
2001 Total	76	85	312	7,802	23
Citrus	5		104	9,000	25
Sumter	5		--		
2002 Total	10		104	9,000	25

New Business Development (Fast Track)

Much of economic growth in Florida is based on small business start-ups or expansion. Many small business enterprises are started each year but only about 40 percent are still in operation after five years. As a significant and growing part of the economy, many small business owners need technical assistance and training. Using the FastTrac program Extension provides appropriate training to help potential business owners understand the steps in starting and maintaining a business.

A number of individuals participated in FastTrac Planning or New Venture programs (Table 1). Because program participants usually invest in a substantial registration fee, graduation rates are very high. These graduates left the program with a strong business plan, a clear understanding of risk management and business continuation, which assist them with the dynamics of the business environment, competition and changing customer needs.

County	Program Type	Number enrolled	No. of business starts or expansions*	No. of new jobs created*	Increase in revenue*
Collier	FastTrac Planning/ New Venture	35	8	37	\$3,498,000

*Based on responses from 16 firms

Leadership Development & Public Issues Education

Extension faculty in Collier conducted a structured leadership program in 2002. The program graduated 36 community members and county employees identified as emerging leaders in a course covering personal leadership style, team building, communication skills, conflict resolution strategies, and problem solving analysis. These skills were then practically applied by five team projects and, upon completion, were presented to county leaders.

In addition, a multi-county project, Leadership Rural North Florida, was initiated in Fall, 2002 by North Florida Community College (NFCC) to provide leadership education for a targeted group of persons in the six counties served by the College. IFAS faculty were invited to participate in planning the leadership development program and they collaborated with NFCC to identify topics and personnel for the program. It is anticipated that the program will last at least 3 to 4 months given the program outline being considered.

Economic Impact Analysis

The project began in 2000 as a special Florida First Initiative to assess the economic role of Florida's agricultural and natural resource industries. A statewide publication was completed and presentations made to Governor's Budget Staff, the Florida Agricultural Council and to staff members of the Florida Congressional Delegation. Team members developed and maintained an Economic Impact Website to serve as a contact point and to provide for electronic distribution of economic impact data, publications, related information, and links to other sites. In addition to publications the website contains information on current projects, faculty contacts, agricultural census data for all Florida counties and economic and demographic profiles for Florida counties.

A number of short-term economic impact efforts were completed at the request of county extension faculty or other clientele groups. Projects are listed below:

- Economic Impact of Agriculture in the C-139 Basin in Hendry County, Florida
- The Potential Economic Impact of Citrus Canker in Florida
- Impact of 4-H Centers in Selected Florida Counties
- Multipliers for Greenhouse and Nursery Production in Jefferson County, Florida.
- Economic Impact of locating a candy manufacturing plant in Madison County, Florida.
- Estimated Economic Impact of Closing the Tyson Foods Poultry Processing Facility in Northeast Florida (requested by M. Roberts, Florida Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services)
- Assist County Extension Office with information on the economic impact of agriculture in Manatee County, Florida.