RUPRI Mission

- Provide unbiased analysis to policymakers on the challenges, needs, and opportunities facing rural America.

- Facilitate public dialogue to help policymakers understand the impacts of public policies and programs on rural people and places.
A Short RUPRI History

- Founded in 1990

- Senate Agriculture Committee Members
  - Kit Bond (MO), Dale Bumpers (AR), Tom Harkin (IA), Bob Kerrey (NE)

- Need for a nongovernmental source of information and analysis on policies impacting rural America

- FAPRI was already in existence examining food and agricultural policies
Why Rural Matters

- Urban focus in policy
- Current policy discussions pit urban against rural
- There is no federal “Department of Rural”!
- Department of Agriculture
  - “Rural Development” Title of the Farm Bill
- Department of Health and Human Services
  - Rural task force during Bush Administration
RUPRI’s Approach

- It’s not rural or urban!
- Regional approaches are necessary
- Cities may be the engine of growth...BUT
- Solutions to future challenges are found in rural America
  - Food, energy, water, environmental stewardship
- The challenge: building support for policies that enhance both rural and urban economies, not either/or.
Farming’s Importance to Rural Employment is Declining

Percent of County Employment in Farming, 1969

Percent Employment in Farming in 1969
- 30% - 49%
- 20% - 29%
- 10% - 19%
- 5% - 9%
- 0% - 4%
- No Data

Percent of County Employment in Farming, 2005

Percent Employment in Farming in 2005
- 30% - 49%
- 20% - 29%
- 10% - 19%
- 5% - 9%
- 0% - 4%
- No Data


But the Broader Rural Economy Is Now Very Important to Farm Household Income

The RUPRI Portfolio

- Analytic and Academic Programs
- Rural Health
- Rural Human Services
- Entrepreneurship
- State Rural Policy Initiative
- Spatial Analytics Initiative
As U.S. federalism continues to devolve, more attention must be paid to policies and programs at the state level, and below.

States are by far the most creative current laboratories for rural innovation and rural/urban collaboration.
Building sufficient capacity remains a critical rural challenge. If rural communities and regions are to plan for and implement intentional futures, validating the beneficial interdependence of rural regions surrounding thriving urban growth centers, hard and soft rural infrastructure must be strengthened.
Inclusive decision-making structures and processes, which promote participation, collaboration, and organizational, institutional, and governmental innovation. Diverse age, gender, ethnicity, income, and geographic constituencies must be included and engaged.
Next Generation participation and leadership is essential, and must be consistently supported.
The future of rural regions and the communities of which they are comprised will be largely determined by their innovation, entrepreneurship, and asset-based place-making successes. Equity of opportunity for economic, cultural, and social success must all be present and aligned, or future community success will be compromised.
State, regional, and county level policy considerations must increasingly include specific attention to land, water, air, and natural resource stewardship, a key future quality of life determinant.
a cornerstone of “Next Generation Rural Communities” will be a spirit of civic engagement, with active citizen participation in local decision-making, and a more general concern for state and federal policy considerations affecting their rural future
Current Projects & Opportunities

- Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR), a regional initiative to diversify the eastern Kentucky region. Co-Chaired by Governor Beshear and Congressman Rogers. RUPRI provides technical assistance and staff support.

- Policy advisories, such as consultation on rulemaking regarding regional development set-asides in the current Farm Bill.
Plan of Work/Future Activity

- Identifying emerging innovations in state and sub-state policy and program design, documenting and sharing those most promising.

- Conducting or coordinating research to assess the impact of these innovations;
Building clearinghouse capacity, to drive information exchange and lessen duplication of effort in these approaches;

Helping rural regions identify, implement and maximize viable, sustainable options for renewal and development;
Connecting practice and research to policy development and execution, to ensure evidence and experience-based successes are taken from the ground to the policy process; and,

In all the above, clearly articulating both the unique rural challenges and opportunities which the public, private, and philanthropic sectors face in supporting these efforts.
Panel Members

- Paul Costello, Executive Director, Vermont Council on Rural Development
- Wes Curtis, Executive Director, SUU Regional Services, Utah
- Barry L. Denk, Director, The Center for Rural Pennsylvania
- Michael W-P Fortunato, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Engaged Scholar, and Director of the Center for Rural Studies at Sam Houston State University.
- Bobby Gierisch, Rural Texas
Cheryal Lee Hills, Executive Director Region Five Development Commission, MN

John Molinaro Appalachian Partnership for Economic Growth (APEG) President and CEO

Christy Tomlinson Morton, Executive Director, Center for Rural Virginia

Charles P. “Chuck” Schroeder, Founding Executive Director of the Rural Futures Institute University of Nebraska.

Connie Stewart, Executive Director at the California Center for Rural Policy (CCRP)

Norman Walzer, Senior Research Scholar in the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University
David Terrell
Director Economic Development Policy
Ball State University
Chair, RUPRI State Policy Panel
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