

CHARTER

Partnership for Rural Nebraska

Amended September 2004

The Partnership for Rural Nebraska original charter was approved and signed on August 9, 1995 by the Governor of the State of Nebraska, President of the University of Nebraska and the United States Department of Agriculture. This amended charter reflects changes in structure and purpose since that date.

VISION

The Partnership for Rural Nebraska is a cooperative commitment by the State of Nebraska, University of Nebraska, the Federal Government and Regional Groups to address rural opportunities and challenges identified by rural Nebraskans; to work together to meet those challenges and provide the resources and expertise to enhance development opportunities.

WHAT IS THE PARTNERSHIP FOR RURAL NEBRASKA?

The PRN is really a name applied to a **strategic partnership**. **This partnership -**

- ◆ Works together to stretch resources thereby benefiting more Nebraskans.
- ◆ Educates each other on available resource and rural development needs, using educational opportunities such as the annual Rural Institute, agency orientations, and seminars.
- ◆ Communicates to Nebraskans and others regarding rural development activities, opportunities and challenges through the newsletter, "Rural News Bits."

The PRN is not:

- ◆ A separate entity or agency.
- ◆ A "bricks and mortar" institution.
- ◆ A duplication of services or programs.
- ◆ A replacement of existing organizations or agencies.

PERSPECTIVE

A formal structure for organizational collaboration, the Partnership for Rural Nebraska is a strategic partnership formed by three major institutions - the State of Nebraska, the University of Nebraska, and the U. S. Department of Agriculture in cooperation with rural Regional Groups of service-providers and community representation. Separately, each of these critical public institutions has a statewide mission and administrative responsibilities for a large percentage of the resources available to assist rural Nebraska.

Together, these institutions have the potential to leverage additional resources to benefit rural Nebraska, and to better utilize existing resources. The Partnership for Rural Nebraska concept builds upon positive results of voluntary communication and collaboration, both statewide and locally.

In a larger context, citizens across these United States are striving for more efficiency from federal state and local institutions and governments. Diminishing budgets to support needed programs and projects are a growing problem. Rural people, enterprises, and communities have long been frustrated with the fragmentation of and duplication among various development resource providers. Many rural people seek a more integrated and supportive system that is responsive to the needs of their communities and rural regions.

Nebraska has earned a national reputation for its progressive and enlightened rural development agenda, and is well positioned to demonstrate that this additional innovative approach to collaborative rural development – the Partnership for Rural Nebraska – is efficient, effective, and most importantly, sustainable.

MISSION

The mission of the Partnership for Rural Nebraska is to improve the effectiveness of resources that support local-based rural development efforts statewide, and to better utilize human and financial resources for rural development.

The members of this cooperative relationship are committed to working with and supporting interested local, regional, statewide, and national partners.

The Partnership for Rural Nebraska's partners will integrate their efforts and coordinate their resources to enhance rural research, policy analysis, program delivery, education and professional development.

GOALS

1. Cooperate on program and service delivery, thereby achieving greater efficiencies and easing the access by rural Nebraskans to partner programs.
2. Plan and program cross-training between the partners in order to improve program brokering.
3. Cooperate in the planning and delivery of program briefings to constituencies.
4. Provide financial and other support to regional groups and assistance in the successful and quality delivery of regional and local program services.
5. Provide consistent communication with constituent groups through *Rural News Bits*.
6. Provide education opportunities on rural development.

7. Create and implement a PRN annual plan of work.

STRUCTURE, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Partnership consists of a Governing Board, an Executive Committee, a Regional Group Committee and an Education Committee. Other subcommittees may be created to fulfill the annual plan of work.

Governing Board

Membership consists of:

- Representation from the University of Nebraska including, but not limited to, the UNL Center for Applied Rural Innovation (CARI); the UNK Center for Rural Research and Development; and the NU Rural Initiative.
- Representation from the Nebraska State Government including, but not limited to, the Department of Economic Development; and the Department of Environmental Quality.
- Representation from the United States Department of Agriculture including, but not limited to, USDA Rural Development; and, the Natural Resources Conservation Service.
- A representative from each of the Partnership regional groups.
- Other members to be added by majority vote of the Governing Board.

The Governing Board will:

- Provide strategic direction and oversight to ensure the Vision and Mission of the Partnership for Rural Nebraska are implemented.
- Approve operational agreements with the Core Partners regarding appropriate fiscal oversight.
- Adopt/amend the Partnership agenda.
- Secure resources for the Partnership for Rural Nebraska.
- Identify a Chair and Chair elect.
- Develop an annual work plan.
- Meet at least quarterly.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee will consist of single representatives from the State of Nebraska, USDA, University and one person representing the regional groups, in addition to the person managing finances. The Executive Committee will:

- Prepare budget and review budget.
- Provide oversight for “*Rural News Bits*”.
- Organizational items as needed.

Regional Group Committee

The Regional Group committee will consist of a representative from each of the seven regional groups.

- To provide information to the PRN Governing Board about activities of each regional group.
- To recommend PRN events that will improve member and community understanding about available services and programs.
- To identify cross-training needs, activity priorities and new actions by the PRN Governing Board that, if undertaken, would improve rural development opportunities.
- To meet quarterly (perhaps by conference call) with one meeting at the annual PRN Governing Board Meeting in conjunction with the Rural Institute.
- In a rotating fashion, provide articles on regional group activities for “*Rural News Bits*”.
- To share information with the regional groups regarding the Partnership for Rural Nebraska and the activities of the Governing Board.

Education Committee

The Education Committee will consist of representatives from the State of Nebraska, USDA, the University and regional groups.

The Education Committee will:

- Organize cross-training for the staff of the Core Partners and other rural development professionals on the programs and resources of each of the partners. This will include:

- “Let’s Meet...” in *Rural News Bits* to introduce people who are working in rural development;
 - Orientation sessions to inform participants (primarily new employees) of the programs in various organizations across the state;
 - The Nebraska Rural Institute, an annual conference educating about rural development.
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- Identify Educational needs for the partnering organizations and regional groups.
 - Implement plans adopted by the Governing Board.
 - Provide feedback to Governing Board on agenda implementation, and other relevant matters.
 - Meet on a monthly basis.

FUNDING

The University of Nebraska Center for Applied Rural Innovation will be custodian/fiscal agent for the Partnership. The Executive Committee will outline fund management procedures following the budget approved by the Executive Board.

Future funding will need to be determined. A budget will be approved by the PRN Governing Board on an annual basis.