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Creating an Entrepreneurial Community

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Institute of Agriculture & Natural Resources
Department of Agricultural Economics
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University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension

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165.50Market Report	Year Ago	4 Wks Ago	4/10/15
Livestock and Products,			
Weekly Average			
Nebraska Slaughter Steers, 35-65% Choice, Live Weight.	150.40	162.18	165.50
Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame, 550-600 lb.	222.54	279.76	279.21
Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame 750-800 lb.	204.34	215.31	221.35
Choice Boxed Beef, 600-750 lb. Carcass.	232.13	248.91	257.50
Western Corn Belt Base Hog Price Carcass, Negotiated.	128.02	63.72	60.88
Pork Carcass Cutout, 185 lb. Carcass 51-52% Lean.	130.97	68.39	64.88
Slaughter Lambs, woolled and shorn, 135-165 lb. National.	153.00	*	136.01
National Carcass Lamb Cutout FOB.	371.23	372.04	363.89
Crops,			
Daily Spot Prices			
Wheat, No. 1, H.W. Imperial, bu.	6.71	4.72	5.09
Corn, No. 2, Yellow Nebraska City, bu.	4.74	3.66	3.63
Soybeans, No. 1, Yellow Nebraska City, bu.	14.54	9.43	9.17
Grain Sorghum, No.2, Yellow Dorchester, cwt.	8.21	7.07	7.54
Oats, No. 2, Heavy Minneapolis, Mn, bu.	4.53	3.18	3.01
Feed			
Alfalfa, Large Square Bales, Good to Premium, RFV 160-185 Northeast Nebraska, ton.	210.00	190.00	203.00
Alfalfa, Large Rounds, Good Platte Valley, ton.	127.50	77.50	77.50
Grass Hay, Large Rounds, Good Nebraska, ton.	107.50	95.00	115.00
Dried Distillers Grains, 10% Moisture Nebraska Average.	235.00	175.00	177.25
Wet Distillers Grains, 65-70% Moisture Nebraska Average.	68.00	53.50	58.50
* No Market			

The Entrepreneurial Communities Activation Process (ECAP) is a holistic approach to help communities support innovation and entrepreneurship by understanding their unique characteristics, community assets and potential opportunities. As a result of engaging in the ECAP program, communities embrace visionary thinking, endorse entrepreneurial leadership, build synergy and are able to leverage resources to attract and retain a working age population which will empower community economic growth.



Over the last two years, seven Nebraska communities have participated in ECAP which has brought together leaders and community members in the community. Nearly 300 people have been engaged in the conversations to determine their community's future with input from over 2,200 people through the discovery tool process (survey). Communities identify efforts/projects to become more entrepreneurial. In a March 2015 community gathering, participants from all

of the communities identified the top successes of the program as:

- Bringing groups together and building awareness of community opportunities and strengths.
- Increasing engagement and communication in the community
- Creating opportunities for a larger group of people to be involved including those who were not previously involved
- Moving towards a vision or action
- Creating opportunities to share resources.

One new resident who is leading one of the ECAP outcome areas shared:

I was new ...when the ECAP process began. To be able to hear collective opinions about the town's identity, the entrepreneurial opportunities available, and the community's vision for change and growth was extremely instructive. I feel a sense of connection to and investment in Ashland that it might have taken me months or years to achieve without this process.

Examples of community actions include creation of a community-wide vision, implementation of a dual credit entrepreneurial program with a community college and high school, development of a young professional group social network, development of a website housing business resources for local entrepreneurs, creation of a new community-wide internet portal where eight different entities funnel information, designation by the State of Nebraska as a Leadership Community, and reception of seed funding to develop an economic development corporation.

The Communities

Pilot communities were selected by population and geographical region. In 2013, the first three communities were Central City, Alliance/Box Butte County and North Platte. The ECAP process changed based on what was learned from the first round of communities from both the community members and UNL Extension staff. The second round of communities began the process in 2014 - Hartington, Ashland, Thayer County and Gage County. The community populations ranged anywhere from 1,000 to 25,000 people.

The Process

Keys to the program are the discovery tool and community conversations. The online discovery tool measures how community residents see their community relative to eight entrepreneurial characteristics. The eight characteristics identified through an extensive review of emerging literature on entrepreneurial communities are: Community Vision, Culture of Change, Leadership, Sense of Place, Infrastructure, Digitally Connected, Education/Workforce IQ, and Entrepreneurial Support Systems.

The community conversations are designed to create a space where community members can get to know, understand and trust one another. Over a series of three to four conversations, community residents explore how their community can become more entrepreneurial and identify steps to move forward. Nebraska Extension Educators and Agricultural Economics Department staff have facilitated the process around the characteristics, but the communities drive the content.

The first step is to identify a community champion/organizer and a steering team. Working with the steering team, a time frame is developed to implement the process and to learn more about the community.

Next Steps

The concepts learned and best-practices identified through ECAP are being developed into a dynamic user-friendly online tool. A community will be able to work through the process alone or work with a facilitator. Is your community ready for this type of process? For more information about the ECAP process, visit <http://eship.unl.edu/ecap> or contact one of the ECAP Team Members:

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The pilot process is funded through a Rural Futures Institute at the University of Nebraska Competitive Grants Program. The grants are intended to foster the development of teaching and engagement, and research and engagement work that addresses opportunities as well as critical challenges facing rural people and places. The ECAP process is an example of a Nebraska Extension Community Initiative program/opportunity.

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