RURAL SUMMIT

**OWNING YOUR OWN DESTINY Alysia Cook, Opportunity Strategies**

Check out Score.org….it is retired people who have skills that can walk through the process of many things. Check out ACCE.org has report about 9 pillars to make yourself valuable in 2025

How do you design a community that people would want to live in and stay in or visit?

Be Intentional:

* What do you want your community to be?
* What is your “Why?”
* What is the authentic culture in your community?
* Nothing happens by accident – you must create your own Destiny

The flavor of the community is based on 4 things: Values, Interaction, People, Place (VIPP)

Process:

1. Product Development
2. Target Identification
3. Marketing

Product Development: Physical assets – Buildings, sites/land, Infrastructure, Housing. Identify Gaps/Needs Assessment

8 Pillars of Economic Development:

**Community Development**: Leadership Development, Workforce Development, Social Infrastructure, Physical infrastructure

1. Leadership Development: Leadership Base, Formal Programs, Civic Clubs
2. Workforce Development: Current Workforce (ask businesses what jobs are needed and start offering those courses on the VoTech level), Future Workforce (create mentor programs for kids as young as 1st grade to see what a business is about), Skills Development
3. Social Infrastructure: Quality Government (proper spending of funds, time management), Affordable Human Services (Quality of life….transportation, hospital, workout places, parks, etc), Cooperation & Collaboration (Working with other programs, or communities. Look at *Funding Bridges=* grant from Wal-mart facilitated by OSU), Customer Experience (first impression. Community needs to give good customer service)
4. Physical Infrastructure: Basic Infrastructure (water, road, sewer, etc.), Technology Infrastructure (Broadband, fiber, etc.), Beautification (Your downtown is the mirror of your community, clean up trash), Housing

**Business Development:** Business Attraction, Business Retention/Expansion, Entrepreneurial Development, Tourism

1. Business Attraction: Manufacturing, Distribution, Service/HQ, Retail/Commercial
2. Business Retention/Expansion: Recognition programs, Visits and Red Flags, Competition
3. Entrepreneurial Development: Resources, The hunt, Incubators, Conduit, Agriculture Succession Planning
4. Tourism: Tourism/Film (make sure your different areas are in the film packet. Get with Oklahoma’s film division), Sports (tournaments as well), History/Heritage, Eco-tourism (fishing trails, birding, golf, etc.), Agri-tourism (tourism on farms, orchards, wineries, etc.), Downtown/Courthouse, Medical (getting medical treatment)

**Product Development Tools:** **SWOT Analysis** (Don’t spend a lot of time on weakness and threats, **Start/Stop/Continue** (make a list of things you should start doing….make a list of things that are a waste of your time to stop doing, don’t be the one doing the events that have come to die, if it is important to someone, they can take it over….and then list of things to continue to do), **Board Development/Engagement** (are they on board, did they sign commitment forms, present and engaged, proactive or reactive, embrace change or resist change, attending/promoting events, annual review, practice prospect visits, sales team roles defined, coming prepared to board meeting), **Visioning** (Must be inspirational, big picture, realistically possible, written down, articulated/shared. What’s your timeframe, how do you define success, past successes), **Strategic Plan** (Schedule your 1-2 day board retreat, get facilitator, environment conducive to creativity, build a 3 year strategic plan and annual work plan. 3 to 7 goal development ->strategy development->metrics->accountability->timetables)

**Target Identification:** Target industry analysis, prospects or corporate or site selection consultants, existing industries, local citizens, tourists

**Marketing:** Where are your target paying attention? Reading, watching, attending, listening, experiencing. Use testimonials.

Creative campaigns to check out: Clovis, NM (radio ad saying come see why your business would be great here); El Paso, TX (had mayor’s message over the airport intercom saying to start business here); Love, Little Rock (wrote a letter to amazon saying why they did not want them to come there because they love not have traffic); Georgia Chamber (advertised why it is better to do business in Georgia)

**How Do Job Creators Judge You? Carol Johnson**

Make your first impression a positive one. The average organization: 3 people are trying to win move forward, 5 people are trying not to get forward, but also not doing anything, 2 people are trying to sabotage and ruin the organization.

Equip the organization with good tools and help them enhance their technique. Be a player coach.

Winning First Impressions

1. Know how the race is won
2. Equip the team
3. Avoid disqualification
4. Get the score

**Know how the race is won:** Know who you are talking to. They all care about 3 things: Speed, Risk, Money. The community that gets the job creator from spending money to making money the fastest. Your goal is to overcome, minimize or compensate for the Risks of your site, workforce, community, and region. The money that gets attention provides the biggest payoff for the job creator’s investment.

Application 1. Understand Speed, Risk, Money Rankings

Existing Business, Target Industries, RFI/RFP, 1st – Final Visit, Talking to Boards and Elected Leaders

**Equip the team:** Trust. Prepare, Plan, Practice. Take time to align your teams. Skills, process, expectations. What do prospects fear about you and your team? Wasting my time.

Start strong.

1. Opening is a timed test (the lead has 3 minutes. The experts..rail, electric, etc….have 30 seconds. State your goal and establish credibility. Agree on the key drivers…such as the site, the rail, the community. Orient the prospect, agenda and map. Then go into the presentation.)
2. Begin with the end in mind

**Avoid the Disqualification:** Uncertainty and Risk kills investment. Boost investment and reduce the risk. What’s your role to reduce the risk? Sound like a expert. Don’t chase rabbits. A rabbit is not what the prospect wants to talk about. Bring the right people and not too many. Don’t publicly announce something that is not official. Don’t always say something stupid, but when you do, don’t keep talking to make it worse. Diversity training is important. Connect before you convince. Anticipate objections: How will you respond? “We don’t think your site can meet our timeline.” “I don’t believe your Tech College can provide adequate training for our new technology.” “Your low education attainment stats scare us.” “Your leadership lacks diversity. Will our client be welcome here?” Learn how to answer these types of questions. Script and practice your objections.

Get the Score: It’s a competition. Closing is a sequence of actions to gain commitment for the logical next step. Timing is everything. Begin with the end in mind. Must close and get our score. What questions do you have? What scares you?

**The Reality of Rural Retail Recruitment Rickey Hays/Kelly Cofer**

* Community development must precede economic development. If you want a retailer or developer to invest in your community – you must show them you are willing to invest in it. First impressions are important.
* Retail is economic development and expanding your retail base must be a part of your economic development strategy – regardless of community size.
* New primary jobs should be the economic development focus, but traditional economic development does not always trickle down to rural communities. Retail development brings increased tax revenue, new jobs, enhanced quality of life, and more shopping and dining options.
* A community’s retail base adds to its quality of life and is an important factor in industrial and business recruitment.
* Retailers like to locate in stable communities – where their risk is minimized. Declining population is a red flag.
* Determine your community’s retail trade area, which is the geographic area from which a community’s retailers derive the majority of their business. The size depends upon the selection of retail goods and services offered in your community. Consumers typically travel greater distances for specialized items and high cost items.
* A retail trade area is not determined by a computer generated radial or drive time, but through a new technology that tracks cellular telephone usage. In rural areas, consumers often drive great distances to shop because they have to. National retailers do not understand the shopping habits of rural consumers.
* Communities must understand the difference between a primary and secondary retail trade area. A primary trade area is the geographic area from which retailers will derive approximately 80-85% of their business. A secondary trade area is a larger geographic area from which retailers derive the remaining 15-20% of their business. Simply, consumers who live in the primary retail trade area may shop in the community multiple times per week. Consumers who live in the secondary trade area will not shop in the community as often.
* Rural communities must know and understand both their primary and secondary retail trade areas
* Market your community to retailers (and restaurants) and retail developers as retail trade area populations, not community population.
* Communities must understand the demographic characteristics of consumers in their retail trade areas and community. In addition to population, ethnicity, age, income, gender, education and shopping habits are important.
* National and regional retailers have preferred location criteria when seeking new locations/communities. Their decisions are largely based on demographic characteristics of the retail trade area. Is the retail trade area population sufficient? Is the community growing? Do the dominant consumer race/ethnicities meet our product’s thresholds? Do individual and household incomes allow enough disposable income to purchase our goods and services? Is the target gender percentage adequate? Do the ages of the population meet our product targets?
* Know the daytime employment of your community and understand the difference between “work here” and “live here” populations. A strong daytime employment base is important to retailers, especially restaurants.
* Target retailers for recruitment that are a “good fit” for your community. This means their preferred location criteria (retail trade area population, ethnicities, disposable incomes, ages and education levels) are a close match to your community. DO YOUR RESEARCH UPFRONT. DO NOT WASTE YOUR TIME OF THEIR TIME.
* Retail site selection is about seeking alternatives, look at multiple sites; and determining which site best meets the retailers’ site location criteria. KNOW ALL AVAILABLE RETAILSITES IN YOUR COMMUNITY. Have site profiles on each site so you can email them to interested retailer and developers instantaneously. Site profiles must contain location map, size of property, for sale or lease, property dimensions, traffic counts, area retailers and retail trade area demographic profile
* Retail recruitment is more difficult for rural communities. As mentioned, retailers do not fully understand the rural consumer and their shopping habits. Consumers in West Texas and parts of Oklahoma may drive 45 minutes or more for retail shopping. Why? Because they have to. It’s not about convenience, it’s about necessity.
* Understand competing communities and their local economies. How does your community compare? What are your strengths and challenges? Know their strengths and challenges. Have a 15 second elevator speech highlighting your community’s advantages. Always control the conversation.
* Retail recruitment is competitive and retailers locate where their risks are minimized and profits are maximized.
* Be proactive, not reactive. If a competing community has a retail incentives program, then your community must have one. It is best to develop a program based on plans in your area, and not use it, rather than be forced to randomly develop one when a retail or retail development opportunity arises.
* A community must strive for a balance of national and regional retail brands and independent retail businesses. They can and should co-exist. Do not abandon your vision for a vibrant downtown district as a place for living, shopping and dining.
* In rural communities, downtown districts are still viewed as the “identity” of the community.
* Over the last twenty years, many communities have chased suburban retail development, oftentimes, at the expense of independent businesses and the downtown district.
* Recognize the importance of existing retail businesses in your community. Create a retail retention program and consistently network with managers and owners of existing national, regional, and independent retail businesses. These retailers can be your best ambassadors when prospective retailers look to locate in your community.
* Upload all retail data reports and available site information to your community’s website. All information must be accurate, current and easy to locate. Information on your community’s website will provide a clear advantage over communities who do not. Everything else being on an equal standing, retailers often locate where the site selection process is quickest and easiest.
* Retail recruitment and development is a process, not an event. Be persistent and do not give up.
* 9 to 5 open hours caters to 3% of potential shoppers.
* Hard corner is at the intersection and is prime retail.

**Advance Location Marketing Jim Walton**

What is a brand? Brand is not the same as logo. Brand is not your slogan. Brand is your promise.

1. Searching for your brand: Talk to stakeholders, existing employers, and prospects on what they think your brand is. When they find their common beliefs of them all, that is the start of your branding. What are the strengths and weaknesses. Assignment 1: What your message is. Ask what are the strengths and weaknesses. What are your target industries and why? Assignment 2: Targets. Assignment 3: What is your message?
2. Sharpen: People don’t know their message. Cannot just say it, prove it. “We have great schools”….prove it. Be ready to back it up. How is your community different? What are your most important messages? Give specifics. Instead of “we have great schools”, “we have college prep and vocational courses for our students with a 20:1 student to teacher ratio.
3. Share your message: When you promote, it is a 3 legged stool: website, outreach,
4. Website – is to answer questions. Has a purpose. If they don’t find their answer, they are not going to call. Site map is important. Want to see: Sites and Buildings, Economic Data, Workforce and Education, Quality of Life,

When writing for website. Keep in mind devices are now reading and finding your websites such as “hey google” and “alexa”. They are tracking key words that would pull up information.

Designing and programming. Website has to be built on a **responsive mobile platform** to look properly on a phone, laptop, or tablet. Buttons are important to make it easy to find it. Show pictures of people working, teachers with students, not pictures of the school building (it’s brick, we know), people eating outside.

Workforce attraction – Considerations? Who are your audiences? Not just the worker but the spouse, the children…what are their needs? How to they register their kids for school? What is there to do?

1. Outreach marketing – email marketing which is promotion via e-mail. They like snippets, and click options. Online marketing is banner ads on the website should be next to articles that fit the client. Print marketing is a brochure and you need it to look nice with nice pictures and good quality paper. Video still has to tell a story even if it is a drone made/phone made video. Social media needs to be active and connect with the people you need to know. Always be connecting.
2. Site Visit – Preparation, don’t come in with a lot of speeches. Ask in advance what they would like to hear from them, what would they like to see. Clean vehicle, mow grass, clean up area visiting. One thing could ruin the visit such as the American flag displayed, but it is all torn up. Make sure everyone is prepared. One little thing can ruin the deal.

**Think Small: the Future of Job Creation in Rural America Matty McClain**

Where do entrepreneurs come from? Average years spent at a job: US=4 years. Big manufacturers are not looking to go anywhere rural. Roofing companies, insurance agencies are doable.

In a rural setting, almost all job growth stems from micro businesses.

Out of 35 countries, the US is 6th in new businesses. For established businesses, the US drops to 26th.

Long term survival (10 years +) US ranks 31 of 35.

Micro businesses – 1-4 employees are 58%, 5-9 is 20%.

Self employed people are four times more likely to be millionaires.

3% of job creators are that big manufacturers you are trying to recruit as well as the rest of the country. 97% are the small businesses.

Where do entrepreneurs come from? Youth, existing business owners, aspiring entrepreneurs, baby boomers, people who want to move back, generational transfer

One way to explain how money stays in community: You pay dentist for kid’s braces, dentist pays roofer for new roof, roofer buys new truck at local dealer.

No one will shop local if the price stinks, the product stinks, the customer service stinks so you need to educate the customer.

Create a bank of resources for businesses to know where to go to get started.

Promote a culture of entrepreneurship=advertise, events, etc

Reach Your Youth=no debt, no spouse, no fear! Tech driven

Provide a place to go=A one stop shop. A person to talk to.

**Dr.**

1969=1/4 households did not have a phone, 10% did not have flush toilets, average life span 70,

2019=2 phone average per person (American), 99.9% have flush toilets, average life span 79,

**Giving Old Bricks New Life/Downtown Revitalization Lorie Vincent**

There are 18,025 cities in U.S. under the population of 25,000. 16,470 cities in US are under population of 10,000. There are approximately 285 cities in the US with a population over 100,000.

CURRENT TRENDS:

Disparity in rural America continues to grow

Out-migration to/from urban centers

Technology has increased job creation opportunities

Social media marketing grows

Growing investment opportunities in rural America

Industry diversification Vs. commodity or single employer dependency

Housing, broadband, education, and healthcare are the 4 corners of the community and your downtown is in the middle

**Creating true livability**: Clean air and water, safe neighborhoods, social interaction/gathering places, vibrant business districts, curbs & gutters/utilities/services, parks and recreation, affordability/cost of living, connectivity, diversity, arts & culture

Industry enhancement 3 most important: Business retention and expansion, Entrepreneurship development initiatives, New industry recruitment strategies

Even if downtown growth or retail businesses does not fall under your umbrella, the health of the downtown district will enhance or impair your economic development efforts.

Most common downtown uses: Boutiques, Specialty Foods (coffee, cupcakes, doughnuts, nuts, candy, yogurt, ice cream, etc.), Arts, Theaters, Music venues, Restaurants and cafes, Gifts and Housewares, Antiques, Consignment, Service businesses (insurance, banking, professional, etc.), Specialty accommodations (like a business hotel), pharmacies, automotive, churches, salons, specialty pet stores, social services, co-working space, media

Most common downtown physical attributes: Sidewalks, streets, street lights, street signs, signs directing to downtown, business signage, business facades, awnings, parking, cohesive look, landscaping, medians, windows, aesthetics of empty buildings.

\*Use local school, civic groups & companies to help with clean up and camouflage (paint murals on the boarded up plywood covering windows)

3 reasons buildings do not get filled: Price is too high, out of state or abandoned building owners, owner can’t afford to bring up to code.

Downtown event ideas: Empty building open houses, featured business happy hours, shop at home campaigns, sports events, live music events, cook-offs and festivals, progressive promotions, holiday events, children’s events, history events, celebrate entrepreneurs, farm to table events, farmer markets

Different initiatives: entrepreneurship trainings, downtown associations, cooperative marketing, special events, façade grants, signage grants, organized workdays (day where everyone gets out and clean their windows and sweep, make a party of it), beautification initiatives, project assistance matchmaking, architecture/visionary assistance, strategic gaps studies (do you have too many of one thing? 4 sandwich shops but no Mexican restaurant?), repurposing sites and buildings, co-working space, gathering spaces, small business recruitment, cooperative landscaping, rotating specialty incubators

Identify yourself. (one example were painted on welcome mats in front of the door, each unique, in front of each business). Creative wayfinding signs with arrows in different locations to where your business is.

Be memorable. Interesting welcome signs “Come in, We’re Awesome!”.

Look with fresh eyes. Gather feedback. Develop an action plan. Gather buy-in and commitments.

Tell the world your story.

Mission: Possible

* Doing nothing is not an option
* Resources and assistance are available
* Citizen engagement is imperative
* Must articulate the end game
* No one group can go it alone
* Rural communities can grow…it’s possible
* Sustainable growth does not happen overnight
* Honor your history, build for the future

**Business Retention and Expansion Greg Last**

Why is BRE important? Keep them from relocating, help them survive economic difficulties, assists them with expansions, encourages local growth, it shows you care.

BRE Plans: SWOT analysis, resource identifications, goals/objectives, determine programs.

If you have a BRE plan or program, have it on your website.

News Release Assistance: Writing, formatting with contact, timing after soft open, distribution to media.

Hiring assistance: Signage, job fairs, workforce commission, local job banks

Congratulations Certificate: Congratulations Proclamation signed by Mayor

Ways of Collecting Business Information: Data collection, leave at businesses, board participation, building permits, Fire Department, ReferenceUSA(library software)

When you get the information, you put it all in a spreadsheet. Next step would be to put businesses on the website. (business directory) CivicPlus is example of one with a module. Could even create a database with Access.

Making community aware of businesses: Create a New Biz List. Has recently opened or coming soon, info, location, web. Used by media, realtors, business development. Distribute via email, sign up on website. Use C.O. permits.

Guide to Marketing your Business: ED programs, newspapers, magazines, non-profit groups, networking events, festivals, schools, sports groups, calendar of events.

Meeting Accommodations: Every business that has a meeting room, Size, AV equipment, limitations, contact, requirements (e.g. food) (ex. Hamburger place had a spare room they didn’t use so were suggested to have it as a meeting space and increased business)

Tourism/Events: Festival vendors, ticket booths, hotel concierge are places to have advertising or even a QR code with the business directory.

Awards and Recognitions: Appreciation luncheon or awards banquet

Social Media: Tweet events, get facebook friends to support business communications, send out business highlight each day/week.

Google your business: Help businesses get found on Google. Go to <https://www.google.com/business/> also put it on the map.

Local Business Report: it is 1 slide only with owner or manager and gives a 2 to 3 minute presentation at City Council and they talk about what they do and if catering for meetings as well as what they do for the community.

Shopping and Dining Guides: Restaurants and retail, distribute to residences, businesses, hotels, airports, used by HR departments for hiring.

**Larger Companies:** Work with HR or relocation company on key areas of interest to employees (schools, housing, daycare, activities, etc.). Create a single ombudsman. Establish relationship early.

Residential Relocation Report: Resource for HR, area housing, schools, day care, hotels, website links

Business Engagement: Maintain list of property managers, attend tenant meetings, upcoming marketing programs, police/fire briefings, emergency contacts, maintain relationships

SIGNS OF TROUBLE: Layoffs over time, less cars in the parking lot, withdrawing from networking events, reductions in philanthropy, declining appointments/commitments, a lot of out of state visitors

Bad Practices: Including Code Enforcement officer in a visitation. Soliciting donations. Walking into business cold. Asking basic questions. Don’t return calls about issues identified. Disclose issues discussed by business.

Best Practices: Include Mayor/Council/City Manager. Stick to business issues. Prep everybody on what and what not to say. Research before a visit. Return calls and try to resolve issues. Maintain confidentiality.

In conclusion: It’s all about relationships: businesses, property managers, chamber, CVB, Community College, SBDC, Main Street, Health Department, HR Executives, Area banks, State ED Office, Workforce Board, COG, Fire Marshall, Building Official

Check out [www.BREI.org](http://www.BREI.org) [www.EDPBestPractices.com](http://www.EDPBestPractices.com)

**Cool Marketing Tools Dale Appleby**

Key characteristics: Easily implemented, affordable, user friendly

ArcGIS Story Maps

ArcGIS Business Analyst – infographics (ODOC does)

Govclarity – mapping

Canva – Create a design (free version available. Has upgrade options for $$)

Poster my wall – Event poster option

Social Pilot – allows you to schedule all your posts for all social media

CRM-Customer Relationship Manager – Hubspot, insightly, salesforce, copper, pipedrive are all examples of types.

Geofencing: Sends invitations or information about you when someone is within the vicinity.

Social Media: 3.2 billion are on some sort of platform. Facebook is top. Instagram has 500 million posts daily.