

be developed to link the financial resources currently existing in rural areas to the financing needs of rural business start-ups. Some claim that we need to attract venture capital from the financial markets. In some situations this may be true, but local investors are often willing to invest in businesses that affect their local communities.

5. Organization and support

Factors often overlooked are the organizational and support needs of value-added business groups. This can be as simple as the need for office, meeting room and clerical support. Extension offices and other local organizations can provide a great service to these groups with a minimal outlay of resources.

More sophisticated organizational and support services are being provided by an array of value-added alliances being created across rural America. These alliances focus on business development support by providing an organizational structure for interaction among entrepreneurs with similar interests, access to seed capital for investigating business ventures, networking opportunities with other groups and individuals, and a host of other valuable services.

6. Rewards

To make the new vision for rural America sustainable, we must adequately reward the individuals and groups providing the sweat and skills that go into business creation. Structures are being developed where financial rewards for the business founders are tied to the financial success of the business. In some areas, the idea of rewards tends to go against rural culture where it is believed that these activities should be conducted as non-paid volunteers for the good of the community. However, this new vision cannot be accomplished with volunteer labor. Business creation is serious business and takes an incredible amount of time and dedication.

Call to action

Achieving this new vision for rural America will require the involvement of individuals from all walks of life, existing rural institutions and the public sector. Examine the six factors listed above. Identify where the needs are and how you can have an impact. Get involved!

... and justice for all

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