

## 1.2 Honoring Rural: Choosing & Using Language, Message and Methods to Market Rural-Focused Endowments

Thursday, January 30 / 4:00-6:00 p.m.

### Session Leader

**Elizabeth Banwell**

Consultant; Former Communications & Marketing Director, Maine Community Foundation

### Peer Leaders/Storytellers

**Jeff Yost:** Executive Vice President, Nebraska Community Foundation

**Tom Cote:** Organizer, Beacon Community Foundation (Daniels County, Montana)

**Monica Mutuku:** Director, Kenya Community Development Foundation

### Session Topic (text from Agenda)

We hear it over and over again – “No one in our rural area knows what an endowment is.” Well, we can all remember a time when we didn’t know either! But we now know that especially in rural areas, it may be that *everyone* (or at least the key gatekeepers) in the community must “get it” before one dime drops for your rural endowment. In this session, we get an overview on message development for targeted donors, and then hear stories about how a few creative foundations have tailored their education and tactics to their rural areas and populations. Then we’ll open it up for more ideas and advice.

### Session Flow

Three “peer leaders/storytellers” will lead this breakout session. Elizabeth Banwell will facilitate the session and will introduce the topic, presenters and the flow of the session to participants.

We have asked presenters to focus on and briefly tell one specific rural communications or marketing or messaging story from your foundation experience. The stories will focus on the struggle around language, message or methods used to educate rural donors, communities and gatekeepers about rural endowment.

Stories will be told *as stories*, always emphasizing the practical over the theoretical. Participants will be provided with some specific “what to do’s, “what *not* to do’s” and “how-to’s” based on things that have worked or *not* worked – in order to help improve their strategic choices and tactics as they design their own back home. The session will flow like this:

Elizabeth	Intro, Context, Introductions	5 mins
Elizabeth	<i>Overall: Focus mostly on your Principle#3 related to message</i> Overview: Why develop a rural communications strategy? What’s different about rural? What are first and critical key steps to take in developing a rural community foundation message?	15 mins
Tom	How you explained endowment in Paper-a-thon Campaign, Leave A Legacy Ad Effort, community visits and meetings	10 mins
Jeff	Outreach to Nebraska media, newspapers	10 mins
Monica	Development of “Beyond Fishing” Brochure	10 mins
Participants	Peer Advice and Stories	Remaining time

### Your Assignment

The following is a five-step outline for your story. Remember, your presentation can and should be brief and informal. In other words, there is no need for powerpoint or even overheads *as long as you follow this outline* and provide handouts or other resources that you think participants might use “back home.” **You will each have 10 minutes.**

1. **Know your environment.** Think about the area in which you work. JUST FOR CONTEXT, start your story by listing **three key things** that you (or your board and staff) knew (or assumed) about the place, your foundations' prior work with this/these rural communities and/or donors. Here are a few suggestions:
  - Type and quantity of rural giving that had gone on
  - Type and quantity of rural wealth that was there
  - Type and quantity of endowment-building or donor-based "competitors"
  - State of the economy – local and global
  - Character of the place and its donors

2. **State the endowment-building goal.** Think about the start of this rural endowment-building effort. Whether explicit or not, folly or not, did your communications strategy have a specific fundraising goal statement like this in mind? If there was none or you have no idea, PLEASE JUST SKIP this and go to #3.

**To build our rural endowment, we will raise \_\_\_\_\_ dollars from \_\_\_\_\_ donors (type and number) through \_\_\_\_\_ type of fund over \_\_\_\_\_ time.**

3. **Tactics and Targets Chosen.** *This section is the guts and color of your story – and should take the most of your time.* Look at the attached matrix arraying tactics and donor targets for building rural endowment. Now tell us the *real life experience* of your indicated story about the communications method or message you used to help build rural endowment – but please focus your story on how your rural message related (or didn't!) to your other endowment-building tactics, and delineate which donor targets the community was aiming for with the message. (If you used some tactic or target that is missing from the list, add it!)

Please – in Steps 3-4, just give us facts. SAVE YOUR LESSONS FOR Step 5. (If not, your story will take 20 minutes. *Start a conversation* with your story here, don't give a lecture!)

4. **Capacities.** Briefly detail the relevant capacities that were used or newly developed over the course of this effort, in terms of:
  - Financial (cash, in-kind)
  - Staffing (who did the actual work -- CF and local volunteer?)
  - Board involvement and role(s)
  - Expertise/policies learned/needed (accepting deferred gifts, land gifts, CRTs, stock gifts, bales of hay; press relations; drinking large quantities of one-bean coffee in one sitting, etc.)
  - Relationships/Other

5. **So what? Outcomes and Lessons.** Tell us the endowment-building outcome (good or bad, significant or paltry) related to your story in terms of one or more of the following:
  - Dollars
  - Range and number of donors
  - Type of gifts
  - Enhanced endowment-building efforts that it has led to (or not) in the community/ area

Please finish up with these **lessons**. Try to make them brief, clever and bumper-sticker-ish. Conclude by answering the following questions as they relate to your story and experience:

- ✓ What are the top *three truest (positive or tough) lessons* your foundation or the community learned in developing and using this rural message to help build rural endowment? (Or, if you had it to do over again, what are top *three things* you would -- or would not -- change about the design of this effort?)
- ✓ What *three lessons or pieces of advice* would you offer to another community foundation that is in the process of developing a similar rural message or communications approach to build rural endowment?