

3.2 Doom or Vroooooom?

Turning Agency, Field of Interest, Donor-Advised and Scholarship Funds into Rural Endowment Building Engines

Friday, January 31 - 10:30 a.m. –12:15 p.m.

Session Leader

Pat Vasbinder

Consultant; Former Vice President and COO, New Hampshire Charitable Foundation

Peer Leaders/Storytellers

Sidney Armstrong: Consultant, Former Executive Director, Montana Community Foundation

Alexandra Reid: Director of Donor Services and Planned Giving, Humboldt Area Foundation

Session Topic (text from Agenda)

Many are the rural-focused foundations that have built significant and ongoing rural endowments based on these basics. But we know there are plenty of questions – How do we keep servicing our scores of individual scholarship funds from eating us alive? How do you make a rural field of interest fund grow beyond its first major donor? To promote agency funds or not to promote agency funds? Should we put all our eggs in donor-advised fund growth strategy basket? Hear here from some peers, and share your own experience about how you can organize yourselves to zoom ahead with these funds and increase your rural endowed dollars-per-mile.

Session Flow

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

Presenters were asked to focus attention on the development of systems and briefly tell your *specific* story about developing the organizational capacity needed to turn fundraising into an *engine* for rural endowment-building.

Stories will be told *like stories*, always emphasizing the practical over the theoretical. Participants will be offered some specific “what to do’s, “what not to do’s” and “how-to’s” based on things the presenters have learned. The session will flow something like this:

Pat	Intro, Context, Introductions	5 mins
Pat	Overview: Why do organizational capacity and systems for these “bread and butter” funds matter? What are the challenges to building them, what are risks of not doing so?	10 mins
Alex	Systems for Donor-Advised Funds & Field of Interest Funds	15 mins
Sidney	Systems for Agency Endowments & Scholarship Funds	15 mins
Pat	Systems for Managing Initiatives (that include endowment)	10 mins
Participants	Peer Advice and Stories <i>Open it up for others to present their approaches and challenges for advice and comment from Pat, Alex, Sidney & fellow participants.</i>	Remaining time

Presenters’ Assignment

- Know your environment.** Think about the area in which you work. **JUST FOR CONTEXT**, start your story by *listing three key facts* that you (or your board and staff) knew (or assumed) about yourself and service region *before* beginning to build your organizational capacity and establish systems for this type of fund. Here are a few suggestions:

- Type and quantity of rural giving and endowment building your foundation had done, including types of funds that were “growth areas” and types of funds that were not
- Type and quantity of rural wealth in your service region
- Type and quantity of charitable/endowing “competitors”
- Your own operating budget, staffing and skills, board engagement—were you responding to a crisis of growth or a crisis of decline?
- Character of the place

2. **State the endowment-building goal.** Think about the start of your effort to design a system to build more and/or better manage this type of endowment fund so that you could turn it into a rural endowment “engine.” Whether explicit or not, folly or not, did this effort have a fundraising goal statement like this in mind?

To build our rural endowment, we will raise _____ dollars from _____ donors (type and number) through [this] type of fund over _____ time.

3. **Challenges and Capacities.** *This section is the guts and color of your story – and should take the most of your time.* Look at the category **Useful Capacities** and **Challenges/Obstacles** on the attached ROUGH DRAFT of “Tactics” sheets related to emphasizing your type of fund. Now tell us the *real life experience* of your story about how you developed systems to bolster and support your rural endowment building using this type of fund in this way:

- First, tell us the two or three lead obstacles and challenges that hit you and moved you toward getting a better handle on managing and promoting these funds **in or for rural areas/purposes/donors.**
- Then, 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 (deferred gifts, land gifts, CRTs, stock gifts, etc.)
 - Relationships
 - Other

Please – in this step, just tell us the facts. **SAVE YOUR LESSONS FOR Step 4.** (If you don’t, your story will take 20 minutes. *Start a conversation* with your story here, don’t give a lecture!)

4. **So what? Outcomes and Lessons.** Tell us the rural 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 community foundation learned as it developed systems to turn this type of fund into a rural endowment building engine? (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 systems to turn this type of fund into a rural endowment-building engine?