A New Vision of the Heartland:
THE GREAT PLAINS IN TRANSITION

Overview of Change in America's New Economy

A report to The Ford Foundation and the Aspen Institute

Prepared by the
Center for the New West
Denver, Colorado

March 1992

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Errata

Overview of Change in America's New Economy

Page 12, ¶3, *l.*6:	The Great Plains states have an average of 33 miles of roads per 1,000 residents.
Page 14, ¶4, *l.*3:	The region has *190* doctors for every 100,000 residents.
Page 14, ¶6, *l.*1:	The death rate in Plains states is *794* per 100,000 people.
Page 16, ¶3, *l.*2:	Over *79* percent of Plains residents have a high school diploma.
Page 16, ¶3, *l.*6:	The number of residents with a college education is *near* the national average of 21 percent.
Page 17:	The source for figure 9 is the US Census Bureau.

If you have any questions on these corrections and clarifications, please call John Shepard, Senior Associate, at 303/592-5310.

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Additional copies of this report, Great Plains Project special studies, and other Center publications are available at the above address.

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Acknowledgments

The people of the Great Plains have inspired and made possible this report. The Center for the New West gratefully recognizes the contribution of these hundreds of Plains women and men—farmers, mayors, small business owners, community leaders, entrepreneurs, teachers, thinkers and doers and people from everyday life from Texas to the Canadian Plains—who talked with us and proudly shared with us the lives of their places.

We also appreciate the support of the Economic Development Administration (EDA), Denver Region, and The Ford Foundation and the Aspen Institute, which provided partial funding for our research.

Thanks, too, to the members of the Center for the New West for their support and to the Center staff for their contributions to the research and production of our studies, and especially to interns Claudia Giannetti and Cathy Quantic for their respective work on state economic development strategies and international trade.

We are grateful to the members of the Great Plains Project Advisory Group, as noted in Appendix C, whose involvement throughout the design and conduct of the studies has been of extraordinary value.

Center trustee Bill Hornby deserves special recognition for his continuing stream of ideas and suggestions. He particularly influenced our decision to focus on the Plains' culture and social fabric as we pursued our story of the region's changing economy and society.

Preface

This report has been prepared to meet the requirements of a grant award by The Ford Foundation and the Aspen Institute to the Center for the New West to conduct an examination of forces shaping the future of the Great Plains. We initiated the project, A *New Vision of the Heartland: The Great Plains in Transition*, on January 2, 1991, as a multiyear, comprehensive examination of the economic, social, political and cultural dynamics of the region. The purpose of the Great Plains Project is to provide a window on the transformation of the region, including its assets and liabilities, the outlook of its civic leadership and some likely future scenarios.

For the Center, this is an interim report of Phase 1 of the Great Plains Project, providing us an opportunity to summarize what we have learned to date. Supported in part by grants from The Ford Foundation and the Aspen Institute, and the Economic Development Administration-Denver Region, Phase 1 focused on the economy of the region in the context of the New Economy. We see Phase 1 as an exercise in what psychologists would call "assessment research," an opportunity to assemble extant research and codified experience, sift through it and see what it means in relation to an issue—in this case, to the process of economic and social change, including economic diversification and the development process, for urban and rural areas of the Great Plains.

We completed a detailed study plan for Phase 1 that (1) defined the domain of the study; (2) specified core hypotheses; (3) combined four methods of research—including literature survey, statistical analysis, special studies and case studies, including field research; and (4) specified a management plan and timetable. Our basic philosophy and approach stressed the need to challenge existing paradigms of rural and economic development; the way data are typically used to support those paradigms; and the need to develop new paradigms, new approaches to measurement and new indicators of development.

We then convened a Project Advisory Group of 14 knowledgeable and experienced professionals to review our plans. (See Appendix C.) The Advisory Group supported the overall study concept and our basic philosophy and approach, though some felt that we were trying to do too much too soon and that we were stretching our limited resources too thin.

They recommended that the emphasis of the initial effort should be **descriptive** (simply to map change), not rigidly analytical; and **heuristic** (to discover and characterize processes of change that really make a difference and concepts and indicators that could be used to describe those processes), not strictly evidential. They

said that we needed to look, to reflect, to generate ideas and insights—not simply to test hypotheses or reinforce traditional thinking. They recommended that we revise the work schedule to provide time for "reflection and percolation."

Most members of the Group supported our desire to immerse ourselves in the turbulence and turmoil of what is actually happening throughout the region. Nearly everyone agreed that field work would provide more insight than would reliance on traditional statistical analysis, at least in the initial phases of the project. On the other hand, they said that statistical analysis, especially of census data, would be helpful as we move up the discovery curve toward comparison and verification.

Throughout Phase I, our basic philosophy and approach to the project remained fairly stable, but we significantly modified our vision of the study. Initially we were "trying to paint a picture." The result is best characterized as a "window on the transformation of the region." Rather than profiling and comparing communities, counties and states, we ended up doing what sociologists might call "life history" case studies—in-depth case studies based on field research—as a way to create windows on understanding the process of change and transformation in the Great Plains as a whole.

This report is preliminary. Its focus is on rural areas and small communities. We have not examined the important micropolitan communities such as Manhattan, Kansas, or Grand Island, Nebraska, nor the large cities like Dallas, Denver, Minneapolis and Wichita and their impact on the entire region, which we think is substantial. We have focused on successful adaptation to change. We have tried to understand how people and communities overcome problems —not to invest in yet another definition of the problems themselves or their implications. The report relies heavily on qualitative research because our purpose is discovery and our approach is to understand what "ethnomethodology" would call the "process of everyday life." We believe this is the best way to comprehend change on the margins.

We have attempted to be true to the preliminary, exploratory nature of our efforts. We make **generalizations**, but they are **tentative**; we list our **impressions**, not our **conclusions**; we discuss **implications**, not **recommendations**. We believe that our impressions and the implications we have drawn merit serious consideration.

We believe we have acquired important insights into some of the dynamics of change in the Great Plains region. We hope to translate these into new tools for policy driven by new paradigms, new indicators and a new contextual interpretation of important traditional indicators—in short, a new understanding.

We share our insights at this time because we want to stimulate others to take a new look from a new perspective and to join us in developing new tools and new interpretations. And, perhaps most important, we hope there can be new alliances among those who are trying to improve the quality of community life in this important region. We need to move knowledge into action. Understanding is not enough. And we need to improve things. Diagnosis is not enough.

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Introduction

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Towns across the Great Plains are turning themselves around to meet the future head on, taking advantage of change, creating opportunity out of setbacks...

The town of Superior, Nebraska (population 2,400) lost a major manufacturing plant in 1986—one more in a string of closings going back 50 years. Superior's citizens, however, banded together and, with the help of a University of Nebraska leadership and strategic planning program, developed a plan for the town's future, building on its local Victorian heritage and its traditional industries of agriculture, food processing and health services.

Two former residents—"grassroots-minded Oklahomans who still care"—and the teamwork of community, business and government leaders in Cordell, Oklahoma (population 3,000) are credited for initiating this small town's economic turnaround. The couple notified Cordell's economic development group of the desire of a Michigan poultry processing plant to relocate. Local leadership responded quickly, and the $1.5 million facility opened operations in Cordell in 1989.

In 1983, Union Pacific Railroad officials told residents of Sterling, Colorado (population 11,000) that the city's historic train station would be demolished. The people of Sterling organized to save the station, raising $300,000 over the past eight years to transform the building into a community center and business offices.

Roaring Springs, Texas (population 240), 60 miles northeast of Lubbock in prairie country, was once a thriving railroad and farm town with more than 2,000 residents. Although it's not located on a major highway nor near an interstate, its economy is growing and diversifying in some creative ways, including a new wholesale manufacturing business that relies on telemarketing, catalogues and UPS.

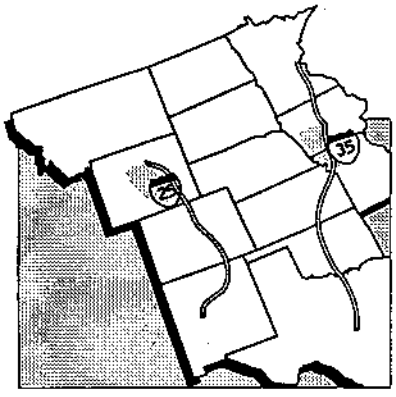
When Kaiser Coal went bankrupt in 1987, Raton, New Mexico (population 8,500) lost 300 jobs and found itself toe to toe with its old economy heritage of rail, cattle and mining. Business and government leaders have since organized and worked to diversify the town, developing tourism and outdoor recreation into core industries along with the mainstays of farming and ranching. Now this old Santa Fe Trail watering hole is optimistic about its future.

Statistics paint a picture of a "declining" community that lost nearly half of its residents between 1980-1990. But Wheatland, Wyoming (population 3,200), 80 miles north of Cheyenne, is a flourishing farm community. Wheatland exemplifies the New Economy principle that a healthy community can grow without increasing its population.

Background

The US segment of the Great Plains stretches from Canada to Mexico—roughly between I-25 along the Front Range of the Rockies, to I-35 which connects Minneapolis to Kansas City and San Antonio. The region includes Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska and the Dakotas; parts of Minnesota and Iowa; the eastern portions of New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming and Montana; and vast stretches of Texas.

The eastern boundary of the Great Plains region has been traditionally set at the 98th meridian, where average annual rainfall more or less drops below 25 inches. In his classic study of the region, however, the noted historian Walter Prescott Webb bounds the area much further east. Webb believed that other environmental factors, such as the absence of timber and the presence of plains—vast, comparatively level expanses—were equally important.[1] Our concentration on common economic characteristics and trends caused us to follow his lead and similarly move our boundary eastward. The interstate highway system defines our economic region, including both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan counties, "urban" and "rural" areas. Within that area, we focused primarily on *nonmetropolitan urban places*—the small cities, towns and hamlets of the Heartland.



This area is larger than every country in western Europe and more than three-fourths the size of the entire 12-nation European community. If this region were treated as a nation, it would be the fourth largest in the world economically.

By our definition, the Great Plains encompasses 12 states covering 741 thousand square miles with 675 counties. This area is larger than every country in western Europe and more than three-fourths the size of the entire 12-nation European community. If this region were treated as a nation, it would be the *fourth largest in the world economically*, with a gross domestic product of $668.9 billion, behind only the rest of the US, Japan and united Germany.[2] Measured by population, the Great Plains would be no. 29, about the size of Argentina. Even without the state of Texas, Plains states together would rank among the world's top 10 economies. The Great Plains has world class industries and generates some of the nation's most important exports. It is also a region experiencing turbulent change: its population is shifting; agriculture and extractive industries are restructuring; and advanced technologies are driving new economic activities and reshaping traditional ones. Some areas have fewer jobs and more outmigration. As in most urban areas, many people lack adequate health care and other basic services.

To some observers, this intensive and turbulent change is a sign that the Great Plains is a region in irreversible decline. Some have advanced proposals to empty and convert large portions of the region to game preserves and parks to be managed by the federal government. Others have urged a policy of triage, where government would identify and target assistance to survivors while helping others die gracefully.

It is our view that these observers are *misreading change for decline*. Their negative interpretation overlooks demographic, social, economic and technological shifts that have dramatically increased since midcentury. It also disregards more recent changes that characterize the New Economy, especially how advances in transportation, telecommunications and other technologies—coupled with changes in the global economic structure—affect the prospects for successful economic and social transition in the Great Plains. In short, decline is an incomplete and sterile interpretation of what is occurring in this dynamic and wealthy region.

The Great Plains

Center for the New West Study Area Boundary

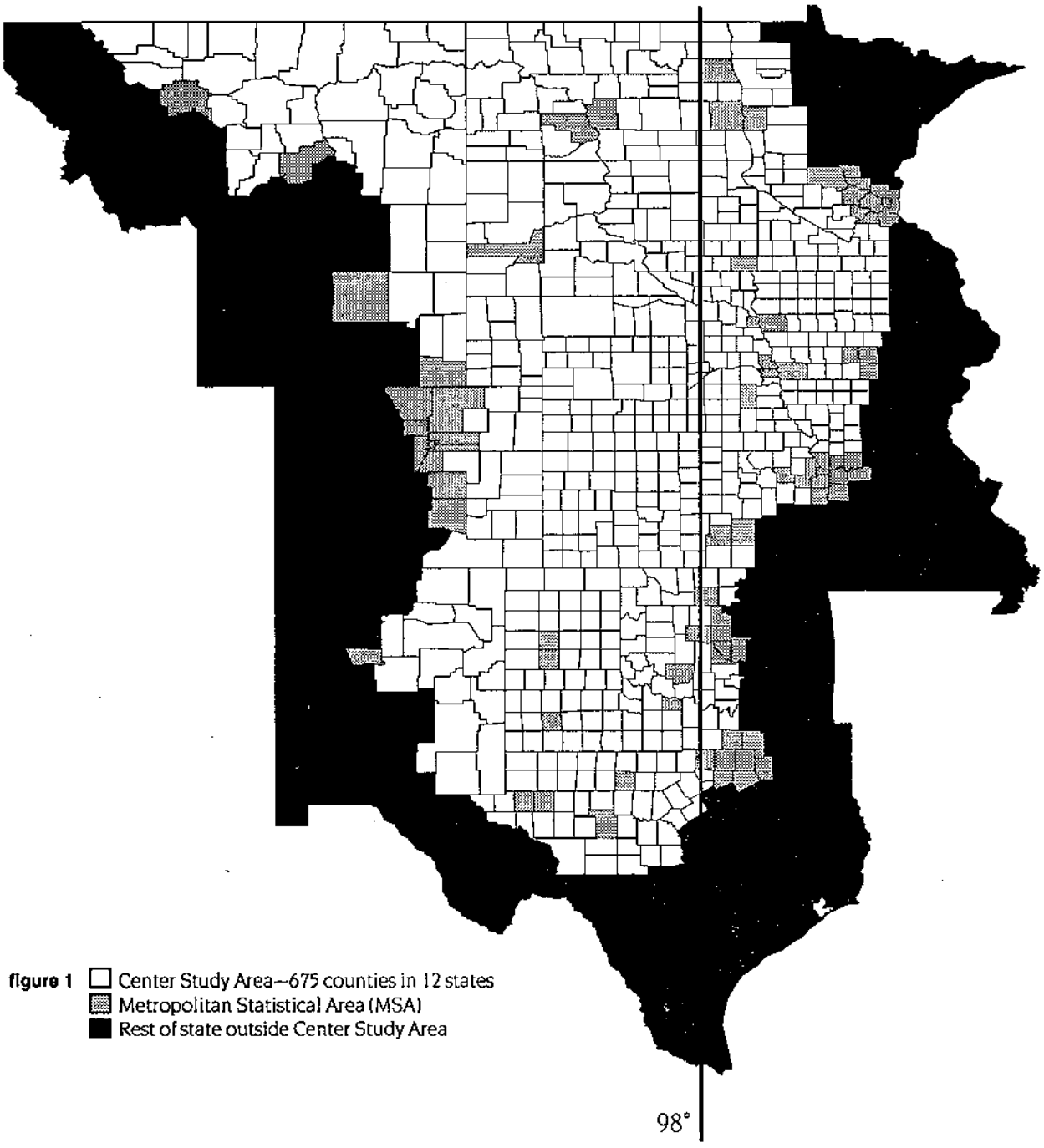


figure 1 Center Study Area--675 counties in 12 states
Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)
Rest of state outside Center Study Area

Words matter. And words can create a self-fulfilling prophecy. Indeed, the region is in danger of becoming what its detractors say it is. Feelings of hopelessness or retrenchment strategies at the community or state level—encouraged by a doom and gloom perspective—do not inspire grassroots leadership to move the region toward economic health. What is needed is an openness to change, new ideas, innovative solutions, models for success, guidance from people and institutions who can help. What is needed is possibility thinking and bootstraps action.

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A New Paradigm

We believe that change is inevitable for the Great Plains region. Whether change will make things better or worse depends on local leadership and other forces at work in the local and regional environment.

The methods we use to look at places and measure levels of distress or vitality *affect the way we come to know things and how we think things work*. Moreover, methods developed for one era often break down when the environment experiences rapid change. Indeed, methods invented in the stable 50s may not work in the turbulent 90s.

It is our premise that the wrenching changes experienced by the US economy and society during the past 20 years have severely undermined many of our traditional social and economic models and associated methods of observation. They are less potent, and they are insufficient to measure things that matter. In the words of the statistician, the measures we use are *reliable* but they are not *valid*. It's like the arrow that always hits the target in the top left-hand corner: Though it always hits in the same place (it's *reliable*), it always misses the bull's eye (it's *invalid*).

We need new ways to look and to evaluate, new ways to know, new ways to measure social progress, new economic indicators. We need new methodologies to integrate and apply the new measures to policy assessment and policy decisions. To that end, we are working to construct a framework, an alternative perspective, through which to view the changes taking place in the Great Plains. In this initial report, we hope to demonstrate that different approaches to assessment and analysis yield a different understanding—and perhaps a more valid understanding.

Using new approaches—what some have labeled "ethnomethodology"—we find that serious problems do exist in some Plains communities. However, we also found that new dynamics in the relationship of rural and urban areas coupled with leadership and other forces shaping events in local communities provide realistic hope for the region's future. The impact of these new forces forms the basis of our assessment of the region and its future.

This report provides an overview of findings from our first look at the region. We looked at the region from both a traditional and a policy sciences perspective. The traditional perspective simply describes change using standard models of measurement and interpretation. The policy sciences perspective looks at the data in order to improve policy outcomes or to improve the decision making process. A policy

perspective has a forward spin: it looks to the future; and a value spin: it tries to improve things.[3] As a result of our findings, we believe we can:

- instill **hope** by showing that there are viable options for people and communities caught in the throes of change;
- illustrate communities that provide opportunities to increase **wealth**;
- demonstrate that the New Economy provides new and expanded **choices**.

More specifically, our goal has been to produce a useful package of knowledge and experience about the region, its communities and its people. We believe this knowledge can be used by policy makers, opinion shapers and practitioners alike in practical settings to make things better. We also aim to improve understanding among local, regional and national opinion leaders about the Great Plains and their importance to America as we enter the 21st century.

Telecommunications, transportation, tourism and global trade, especially, offer many opportunities for development in the Great Plains.

Transformational Themes

Our "walking around research" took us to those areas that people said were in trouble: rural areas and small communities in the region. We were looking for successes where others found only problems, for viability where others found only decay. We were looking for examples of what is working.

Our findings suggest a number of intriguing principles, what we call *transformational themes:*

Adapting to the New Economy

New Economy thinking and practices are making inroads into small communities and towns. The New Economy is characterized by global competition and global markets, the fragmentation of mass markets into niche markets, information and technology intensity, entrepreneurship and innovation, rapid turnover in products and markets, and the growing importance of leisure and recreational activities. Telecommunications, transportation, tourism and global trade, especially, offer many opportunities for development in the Great Plains. People throughout the region have the capacity to respond, adapt and adjust to the dynamics of globalism and the knowledge-based economy.

A Changing Role for Government

In economic development, government's role as the sole or primary resource provider is diminishing and becoming more limited in its scope, while its role as a broker of information and technical resources is increasing. At the local level, the government's role is increasingly secondary to that of civic leadership in determining community success. Strong and effective local civic leadership is crucial to community survival. Moreover, civic leadership coalitions are beginning to play a more important role at the state level.

The Interdependence of Community and Economic Development

Plains leaders are taking an integrated approach to community and economic development to adapt to New Economy challenges. Investments in health, education, basic city services and downtown renovations create jobs, attract talented

people, encourage new business start-ups and business expansion and improve the quality of life. Business development—a traditional tool of economic development—advances the quality of life and contributes to the economic vitality of a community.

The Relationship Between Community and Place

The New Economy revolution is transforming how people relate to each other spatially, how they make and use towns and cities. We see an emerging "archipelago" society, supporting "island-like communities" of different types and sizes of places, connected to each other in networks across time and space. These linkages provide the ties that strengthen communities and create opportunity and wealth. We also see that communities, working together in new and innovative ways, increase their potential for social and economic vitality. Called "the only serious new idea in rural development," multicommunity collaboration is working for Plains communities from Saskatchewan to Iowa and is beginning to spread throughout the region.

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Communicating Our Ideas

Getting our ideas and work into the mainstream of everyday life is one of the major goals of the Center for the New West. It is in the day-to-day world of planning and strategy sessions, seminars, town meetings and other forums that the lessons from the Great Plains Project can be most useful. Our findings must also be useful to corporate, government, foundation and other professionals who work with "rural" issues, communities and people; to community and state leaders who shape development strategies and make resource allocation decisions; and to reporters and editors who write about these issues.

Accordingly, a significant focus of the Great Plains Project has been to communicate the essential elements and implications of the study at the local, regional and national levels. Accomplished through a coordinated program, these communications have included:

- an aggressive media relations effort to place stories in local, regional and national media;
- development and media placement of op-ed articles by Center staff, associates and fellows;
- public lectures, speeches and presentations at local, state and regional meetings and conferences;
- background sessions, editorial board meetings and other media briefings; and
- briefings for senior public officials, business leaders and others requesting advisory services.

These efforts will continue and will be expanded to include:

- op-ed articles prepared for and targeted to specific newspapers nationally and in the region;
- columns for the Scripps Howard News Service by Philip M. Burgess, whose weekly column is distributed to over 200 major newspapers;

- editorial board meetings in cities throughout the Plains;
- targeted *Points West* Briefing Papers (for example, a paper targeted to state legislators which discusses economic development in the New Economy and illustrates what's working in the Plains);
- *Points West* Advisories on various aspects of the study, to be distributed nationwide;
- *Great Plains Studies*, a series of in-depth publications based upon our special studies; and
- speeches and briefings for public, private and nonprofit leaders.

Appendix D lists published articles, op-ed pieces, columns; and presentations, briefings, interviews about the Great Plains Project.

The cornerstone of our research program has been to look at community adaptation to the New Economy.

Research Approach

As discussed in the *Preface* to this report, we treated the first phase of the Great Plains Project as an opportunity to look at existing research and codified experience to see what it means in relation to the process of economic and social change for urban and rural areas of the region.

Accordingly, our approach included a comprehensive review of the literature and demographic analysis. The cornerstone of our research program, however, has been to look at community adaptation to the New Economy: a telephone survey of small communities that are surviving, even succeeding; in-depth case studies, including field research, of two small towns; and opinion surveys of economic development practitioners.

We also used informal expert review to broaden and test our ideas, and, as described in the *Preface* and detailed in Appendix C, we organized a Project Advisory Group (PAG) to review project and research designs and products.

Perhaps most importantly, evidence from participant observation[4] and the extensive use of interviews have been central to this project. The research team has interviewed decision makers, grassroots leaders and people from everyday life in small towns and communities throughout the Great Plains. Our "walking around research" reveals that successful communities know the importance of possibility thinking and bootstraps action.

(See Appendix F for a detailed description of our research approach.)

Two Views of the Great Plains

"America's size in the imagination was [once] limitless. After Europeans settled and changed it, working from the coasts inland, its size in the imagination shrank. Like the center of a dying fire, the Great Plains held that original vision longest."

—Ian Frazier, 1989[5]

The Great Plains states are home to 38.7 million people (15.6 percent of the US total), 22.7 million of whom live on 741 thousand square miles of Plains counties.[6] Although over 35 percent of the nation's farms and 60 percent of the farmland are in these states, growing $55.2 billion worth of the nation's agricultural products,[7] most residents call the region's 1,197 towns and cities home, not to mention those living in the 4,819 smaller "nonurban" places. Even in South Dakota, the most "rural" state, over 50 percent of the people live in the 118 urban places of 2,500 people or more. Colorado is the most "urban," with 82.4 percent of its population in 170 towns and cities. Nationally, 72.7 percent of US residents are urbanites.[8]

These old reliable indicators of yesterday don't work as well today because they do not measure what we really need to know: the conditions of the "everyday life" of people, their assets and liabilities and hopes for the future.

Economic Indicators and the Great Plains

"It is impossible to predict which rural communities will grow on the basis of broad trends or statistical data. Some factors can be helpful in specific situations... But these characteristics do not ensure a strong local economy."

—National Governors' Association, 1988[9]

Many observers rely on familiar but flawed and insufficient social and economic indicators to measure local distress and vitality. A few key statistics—population, income and employment—have historically been used by researchers and policy makers as indicators to pinpoint areas in distress. Their purpose is to identify distressed areas or document victims and then target them for special assistance or study, in order to improve their quality of life. Change in these statistics is presumed to indicate a related change in that area's economy and quality of life.

These old reliable indicators of yesterday don't work as well today because they do not measure what we really need to know: the conditions of the "everyday life" of people, their assets and liabilities and hopes for the future. These "empty records of

past performance"[10] are united in their flaws: They have inaccuracies. They lack timeliness. They mask quality. They are frequently but often incorrectly used.

Traditional measures don't do a good job of measuring New Economy activities. "Flawed measurements," *Investor's Business Daily (IBD)* points out, "can give an unreliable picture of the state of the economy." As David Hartman, chief international economist at DRI/McGraw Hill Inc., told *IBD*, "In my gut, something tells me that business as usual isn't an acceptable answer."[11]

The problem comes down to nationalizing standards that were developed for a particular region and then judging other regions by those standards.

Distortions result when flawed local measures are aggregated to describe larger areas. In addition, indicators quickly lose their flavor for "everyday life" when consolidated at the higher levels typically used for analysis. Professor John Allen of the University of Nebraska comments, "I have found a variety of communities surviving when the aggregate data indicates they should be failing."[12] The Heartland Center for Leadership Development, in developing the procedure for our case study analysis, found that:

> Prediction of community viability based on such [large-scale economic and demographic trend] data ignores both the day-to-day workings of the small community economy, and the realities of change at the local level.[13]

Problems of Standards and Values

Economic indicators developed in other regions over the years have been turned into national standards. The problem comes down to nationalizing standards that were developed for a particular region and then judging other regions by those standards. The Homestead Act acreage allotment, for example, based on experiences in states east of the Plains, was initially only 160 acres.[14] In Plains country, neither farmers nor ranchers could make a living on that acreage. Congressional changes belatedly recognized regional differences. In the East, units were reduced to 80, then 40 acres, while in the West, units gradually increased to 640, although even that is not enough in parts of Plains where 2,000+ acres are needed for a viable ranching operation.

Former University of Montana professor Carl Kraenzel, in his 1955 book *The Great Plains in Transition*, notes that people cannot understand, or survive on, the Great Plains if they continue to apply standards which are "patterned after ideas from the humid area"[15] of the East Coast. The basic problem is that the *character* of this region is *inherently* different from "humid areas" of the East, South or West Coast. Using standards developed in areas where you can graze 40 cows to the acre often does not work in an area where you need 40 acres per cow. Using national *averages* as standards distorts reality in the Great Plains region.

There is also a values problem. For example, there is a tendency to import the values of urban people into the models we use to assess the quality of life in rural areas. Like the parable of the city mouse and the country mouse, the values do not always translate.

What Traditional Indicators Say About the Region

Traditional indicators look at what was important in the industrial economy of small farms and big business. The Great Plains region does not come out well when measured by traditional indicators.

figure 2

Population of the Great Plains States, 1990

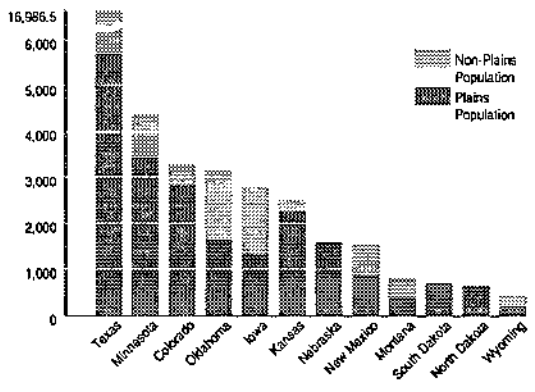
	1990 population (in thousands)	Percent of total US population
Texas	16,986.5	6.83%
Minnesota	4,375.1	1.76%
Colorado	3,294.4	1.32%
Oklahoma	3,145.6	1.26%
Iowa	2,776.8	1.12%
Kansas	2,477.6	1.00%
Nebraska	1,578.4	0.63%
New Mexico	1,515.1	0.61%
Montana	799.1	0.32%
South Dakota	696.0	0.28%
North Dakota	638.8	0.26%
Wyoming	453.6	0.18%
Great Plains	38,736.8	15.58%
US Total	248,709.9	100.00%

Source: US Census Bureau

Demographically, the Plains states have 15.6 percent of all US population. (See figures 2 and 3.) This includes a larger proportion of the very old (75+) and very young (under 15), and the baby boom bulge sticks out about the same as across the rest of the US.[16] There are not as many Blacks nor Asians, but more Native Americans than in other regions. About the same proportion of population is Hispanic as in the rest of the US. Plains states overall gained about 775,000 people through migration in the 1980s. However, most immigrants settled in eastern Texas and the Front Range of Colorado.[17] All of the other states, except New Mexico, had negative net migration during this period. More recently—during the 15 months ending on July 1, 1991—each of the Plains states (except Kansas and North Dakota) shows positive net immigration.[18]

figure 3

Plains and Non-Plains Population (in thousands)



Source: Census Bureau.

The Great Plains is an energy-producing region. About 25 percent of US energy-producing installations are located in Plains states.[19] Texas has the most units overall (444), but Minnesota has the most coal-fired (55) power plants; Iowa has the most petroleum-fired (270); and Montana has the most hydro-generators (84). Minnesota, Nebraska, Texas, Iowa and Kansas have nuclear power stations.

The Great Plains is also a large energy-consuming region. The region uses more energy than the country overall, with per capita energy consumption at over 450 million BTUs, compared to the national average of 327.6 million BTUs. Even without Texas, the largest energy-consuming state in the region, per capita energy consumption is still 360 million BTUs, higher than the national average.[20] Reason: agriculture, an important sector of the regional economy, is an energy-intensive economic activity, and transportation across wide open spaces requires a lot of energy.

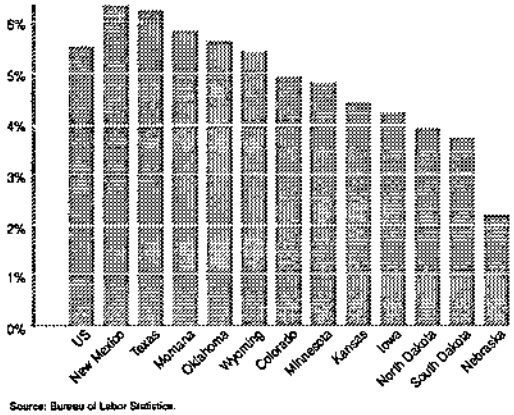
Using standards developed in areas where you can graze 40 cows to the acre often does not work in an area where you need 40 acres per cow.

In the 19th century, the only way to get goods to market was by train. Railroads now operate 51,250 miles of track in Plains states, 35 percent of all US rail mileage.[21] But trucks replaced trains as the primary channel for market access after World War II. Today, these states have 1,287,911 miles of blacktop and 33.2 percent of US streets and highways.[22] Also, as expected, the network goes from more dense to less dense, east to west. There are more miles per person as well, with an average of 58 miles per 1,000 residents compared to the US average of 15.6. This leads to consistently higher expenditures for road building and maintenance by state and local governments in the Plains. It is a cost of wide open spaces.

Personal income is lower in the Plains than in the nation overall, but so is the cost of living. Unemployment is also lower and the labor force participation rate is higher.[23] Per capita income, $17,061, is only 91 percent of the US average of $18,748. (See figures 4 and 5.) The 5.32 percent annual average unemployment rate for 1990 compares to the national average of 5.51 percent. The participation rate (the percentage of the civilian noninstitutionalized population in the labor force) is 68.83 percent compared to the US average of 66.36 percent.

figure 4

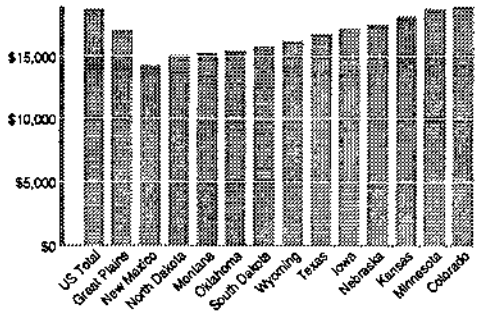
Average Unemployment Rate in Great Plains States, 1990



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

figure 5

Per Capita Income
In Great Plains States, 1990



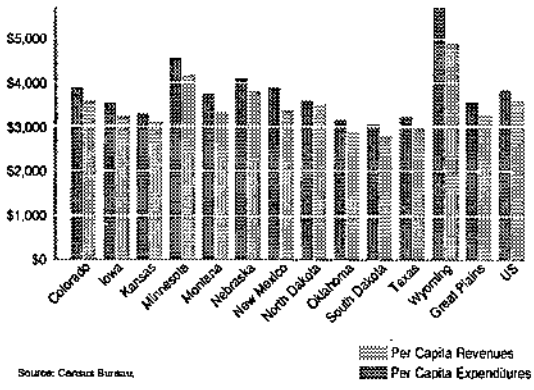
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

Per capita income and unemployment, however, are accurate measures of local welfare only when you assume that: the cost of living is constant across the nation; all important goods and services are provided through markets; and people assign equal values to activities such as child rearing and income-producing work.[24] In fact, however, these assumptions cannot be met. For example, there is a 53 percent differential in cost of living among states in the US (Connecticut vs. Mississippi). Also, many people accept lower wages in rural areas in exchange for higher quality of life, and personal choices on the relative value of different types of work and leisure affect the way people value monetary income.[25]

State and local governments in Plains states annually collect $139.1 billion, 14.5 percent of all revenues collected in the United States.[26] Per capita revenues—consistently higher in many of these states because of severance taxes levied on extractive industries—range from $5,687 in Wyoming to $3,064 in South Dakota. The US average is $3,841. Total state and local expenditures were $128.3 billion in fiscal 1989, 14.4 percent of the US non-federal total. Per capita spending followed expenditures, from Wyoming at $4,874 to South Dakota at $2,785, around the US average of $3,589. (See figure 6.)

figure 6

Per Capita Revenues and Expenditures
of State and Local Governments, 1989



Source: Census Bureau

The numbers indicate a mixed bag of opportunity and problems. People, however, are more than numbers.

A "People-Centered Approach"

"A place is nothing in itself. It has no meaning, it can hardly be said to exist, except in terms of human perception, use, and response."

—Wallace Stegner, 1965[27]

A "people-centered approach" to economic indicators is needed if we hope to begin to understand the Great Plains. Current indicators need to be improved and customized. "We must ask if there are other values by which we judge our communities," states Joseph Luther of the University of Nebraska.[28] We need new measures for the New Economy—indicators that may be more indicative of the adaptability and staying power of communities. Our view takes into account a community's stock of assets and liabilities—"balance sheet" factors—in addition to indicators of flows and change that are typically found on an "income statement."

A "people-centered approach" to economic indicators is needed if we hope to begin to understand the Great Plains.

Community planners, social accountants and public policy makers tend to focus primarily on "flow" variables analogous to the income statements of business. They compile current and historical trend data on the operations of the community or its economy. They want to know what direction things are headed. Yet investors look first at a balance sheet, not at an income statement, and last—and with a great deal of skepticism—at pro forma projections of a company's future. Investors understand that assets and liabilities are more important in assessing the fundamental viability and economic future of a firm than are measures of current operations. We need to learn from investors to create community "balance sheets."

Measuring what people think is important

While the analyst looks at employment, income and population, polls show that real people value good health, solid job prospects, home ownership, financial well-being, leisure time, education, personal mobility and safety.[29] Using standards people care about, the Plains do very well. For example:

Quality health care. The Plains are healthier than the rest of America, even though national standards would say that institutional health care lags behind other regions. The region has 116 doctors for every 100,000 residents, compared to the national average of 234. Minnesota is the only Plains state which exceeds the national average, having 236 physicians for every 100,000 residents.[30] On the other hand, an examination of health care outcomes gives a very different picture. For example, even with fewer doctors, infant mortality is lower than the US average of 10 per 1,000 births in every state except North and South Dakota, which had exceptionally high rates for non-whites.[31]

Teen births are lower overall. The percent of births to teen mothers varies greatly north to south, as Minnesota and North Dakota have much lower rates (7.3 and 7.6 percent) than do New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas (all above 15 percent). Without the latter three states, teen mothers account for 9.5 percent of all births in the Great Plains, less than the national average of 12.5 percent.[32]

Death rates are also lower than the US average (842 vs. 882 deaths per 100,000 people), with Iowa high (983) and Colorado low (647).[33]

Relative to the rest of the country, the Plains states have an efficient and effective health care system.

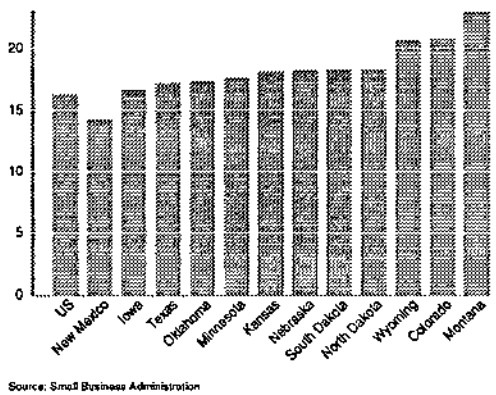
State and local governments spend over $2.2 billion a year on health care in Plains states, 10 percent of the US total for 15.6 percent of the population.[34] Within the region, Montana spends the most per person ($94 per capita), and Nebraska spends the least ($32 per capita) compared to the US average ($83 per capita). In short, the Plains score high on health outcome measures, such as infant mortality and teen births, and low on health input measures, such as physicians per capita and state and local government spending per capita. This means that the Plains states are getting more for less from the health care system. Relative to the rest of the country, *the Plains states have an efficient and effective health care system.*

An entrepreneurial economy. Economic well-being is not just jobs and income. It includes indicators such as entrepreneurism measured by new business formation, business expansion, job creation by small business and job creation by locally-owned businesses; modernization and use of information technology; inmigration measured by skill levels; and telecommunications and transportation indicators such as digital switching, satellite up-links, proximity to airports and accessibility to express mail services.

Measured by number of firms, the people of the Plains are highly entrepreneurial. (See figure 7.) In every state of the region except New Mexico, the average number of firms per 1,000 population exceeds the national average of 16.3. Entrepreneurial spirit is highest in Montana, Colorado and Wyoming, which have more than 20 firms for every 1,000 people.[35]

figure 7

Firms Per 1,000 Residents in Great Plains States, 1988



Source: Small Business Administration

Plains states are strongly tied into the international trade arena. These states exported $54.3 billion in 1989. Texas led with $38.1 in exports, while South Dakota and New Mexico ranked last with $0.16 and $0.21 billion each.[36] Overall, 35 percent of Plains exports have destinations within the North American trading bloc of Canada or Mexico. North Dakota relies most heavily on North American trade, with 77 percent of its exports on this continent. Total Plains exports to Mexico jumped 70 percent between 1987-1989.

While Plains trade has traditionally been in agricultural goods, trade is diversifying. Colorado's top export to Canada is computers, while the state imports newsprint and photographic goods. Nebraska exports high value-added processed foods, including so-called gourmet frozen foods, and imports rail cars. Others are building on the established agricultural base, as in North Dakota where tractors and front-end loaders are sent north to Canada in exchange for fertilizer and vehicle parts.

The Great Plains states are also diversifying their economic base—including rapid growth in high wage business and professional services, and in high tech and general manufacturing. (See figure 8.) In the years before the recession (1988-1990), all three sectors (business and professional services, high tech manufacturing and general manufacturing) created new jobs in most Great Plains states, despite overall job losses in states such as Colorado and Wyoming.[37] Manufacturing accounted for 50 percent of South Dakota's net new jobs, and at least 25 percent of net new jobs in half of the Plains states. It is not an overstatement to say there is a manufacturing boomlet underway in the Great Plains region.

figure 8 **Distribution of Population by Economic Sector in Great Plains States**

		Share of total population			Share of rural population		
	Counties	1969	1979	1989	1969	1979	1989
Metropolitan	80	64%	66%	70%			
Nonmetropolitan	595	36%	34%	30%	100%	100%	100%
Farming	306	12%	10%	8%	32%	30%	28%
Government	37	4%	4%	3%	10%	11%	11%
Manufacturing	16	2%	2%	2%	5%	5%	5%
Mining	24	2%	2%	1%	4%	5%	5%
Mixed	25	1%	1%	1%	3%	3%	3%
Other	2	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Retirement	19	2%	2%	1%	4%	5%	5%
Trade	166	15%	14%	13%	41%	42%	43%
Total	675						

Source: Special Study #GP-009, Drabenstott and Smith, Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City

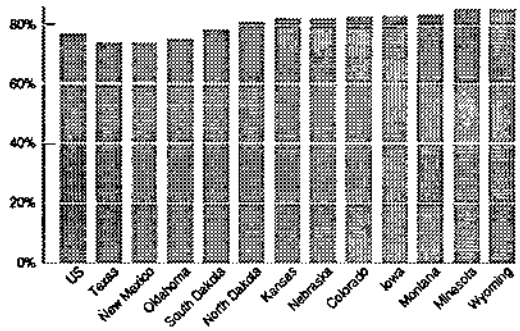
Quality education has been a hallmark of life on the Plains since pioneer days.

Quality education. Quality education has been a hallmark of life on the Plains since pioneer days. Over 82 percent of Plains residents have a high school diploma, compared to the national average of 77 percent.[38] (See figure 9.) Here, once again, north and south diverge, with below national averages in Oklahoma, New Mexico and Texas. The north-south divergence disappears for people with a college eduction, with the Plains average at the national average of 21.1 percent. The states of Colorado, Kansas and North Dakota have the highest percentage of residents with four or more years of higher education.

Contrary to popular belief, high educational performance is not tied to educational spending. Minnesota, the Dakotas, Iowa, Nebraska and Montana have the highest high school graduation rates in the country. Although Minnesota spends more per pupil than the national average ($5,025 versus $4,952), the other five states do not. In fact, Nebraska and the Dakotas spend less per student than the national average.[39]

figure 9

Percent of Population Over 25 Years Old With High School Diplomas, 1989



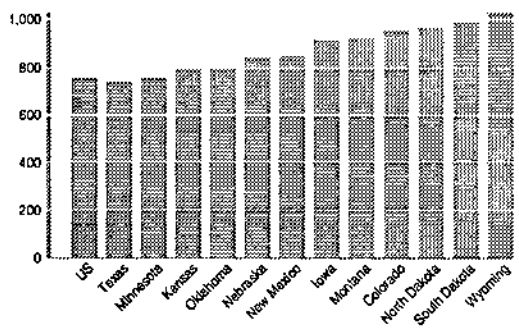
Source: National Center for Health Statistics

Mobility. People value ease of movement, especially in a region as vast as the Great Plains. Aircraft activity is higher, proportionally, than the Plains states' 15.6 percent share of US population. For example, the Plains account for 1.1 million (17.3 percent) of 6.6 million domestic flights and 87.3 million (20.1 percent) of 433.2 million US passengers taking off in these states.[40] Although state and local expenditures are higher than the US average for highways, per capita expenditures on air transportation by state and local governments are below the US average of $23.17, except for Colorado's $53.34 and New Mexico's $37.68.

As mentioned earlier, the Great Plains compare very well to the rest of the nation in streets and highways. Automobiles play an integral part of life on the Plains. While the US averages 756 automobiles for every 1,000 people, every Plains state except Texas and Minnesota exceeds this average. (See figure 10.) Wyoming even has more cars than people! Moreover, these cars are used to a greater extent. Except for Iowa, people in the Plains travel farther by car than the typical American. The average number of vehicle-miles traveled in the US was 12,727 in 1989; the average for most Plains states exceeds 13,500; Wyoming exceeds 17,000.[41]

figure 10

Registered Motor Vehicles per 1,000 Residents in Great Plains States, 1989



Source: Federal Highway Administration.

Those in the economic and community development business need to incorporate assets such as infrastructure, tax base, home values, investment portfolios and cash—and liabilities—such as personal and corporate debt. We also need to emphasize assets such as leadership.

A quality environment. Some people contend that the Great Plains is an environmental disaster waiting to happen, in large part because of environmental hazards in modern agriculture. There are, however, over 118,000 miles of monitored rivers in Plains states, 93 percent of which meet Clean Water Act goals for fishing.[42] Rivers in Wyoming, Montana and New Mexico meet 100 percent of the Act's goals for swimming quality. Even better, 99.9 percent of the 4.2 million acres of fishable and swimmable lakes meet federal goals. On the other hand, ground water depletion and contamination are serious problems. And 13.5 percent (165) of the nation's "Superfund" hazardous waste sites are located in Plains states, with the most in Minnesota, Texas and Iowa, and least in North and South Dakota and Wyoming.[43] Still, new technologies and management practices in water and energy conservation, organic fertilizers and bioremediation technologies for soil and water contamination are being introduced. These new technologies and practices are beginning to reduce some major environmental impacts of modern agriculture. Further development of such technologies can increase the mitigation of hazards and the capability to manage them.

Framing the Question

Business leaders are also struggling to adapt to the demands of the changing economy. They recognize that the asset base is changing, that things like research and technology, a work-ready labor force, quality of management and technical expertise do not appear on company balance sheets.

Similarly, those in the economic and community development business also need to incorporate assets such as infrastructure, tax base, home values, investment portfolios and cash—and liabilities—such as personal and corporate debt. We also need to emphasize assets such as leadership and morale, technical and professional skills, and information and telecommunications sophistication. We need to find ways to systematically incorporate these assets into our assessments and policy and program determinations.

Only then can we find a better way to frame the questions vital to the future of the Great Plains, or any other place.

Chapter 3

Transformational Themes

Adapting to the New Economy

"The most important economic development of our lifetime has been the rise of a new system for creating wealth, based no longer on muscle but on mind."

—Alvin Toffler, 1990[44]

Balanced growth is not the norm in the New Economy. The name of the game is rapid adaptation to changing situations.

Between September 1990 and 1991, companies in the state of Nebraska added 5.31 percent more nonagricultural jobs, the highest growth rate in the nation.[45] Right behind Nebraska were no. 2 South Dakota (3.06 percent), no. 5 North Dakota (2.35 percent), no. 7 Montana (1.91 percent) and no. 9 Colorado (1.44 percent). All the top 10 states were west of the Mississippi. *The Wall Street Journal* credits Nebraska's twin foundation of telemarketing and food processing—both New Economy industries—for that state's recent growth.

The New Economy is here to stay. "The economy of the 90s is going to be a whole different ball game," comments David Birch, president of Cognetics, Inc.[46] More than just an "information economy," the New Economy, like capitalism itself, is based on "creative destruction"[47] and on what Birch calls "churnings"; on the changing role of agriculture and small businesses; and on the rise of technology, telecommunications and global trade.

Innovate or die. Balanced growth is not the norm in the New Economy. The name of the game is rapid adaptation to changing situations. It's all about "managing chaos" to "innovate or die" or, at least, to look at change from a strategic rather than static standpoint.[48] Changes in transportation and technology, consolidation of agriculture and the "malling of America" (consolidation of retail outlets) have changed how people relate to each other. The centuries old movement from farm to town has been reinforced by an urbanization of rural taste.[49]

Innovation is alive and well in successful small communities in the Great Plains, in their large and small businesses, in community and economic development activities, in New Economy businesses and traditional economy businesses. In Superior, Nebraska, for example, the grain business has adapted to new market conditions—including deep penetration of international markets in Asia and Mexico and new ways of doing business. For example, farmers now store their grain, monitor the

Innovation is alive and well in successful small communities in the Great Plains, in their large and small businesses, in community and economic development activities, in New Economy businesses and traditional economy businesses.

commodities market by computer and negotiate price. Grain companies are no longer storage houses, but have become brokers who first sell grain to international markets, then find suppliers and arrange for shipment to the buyer, storing only long enough to schedule the shipments.

In Brush, Colorado, the cattle industry has adapted. One company is engaged in national video marketing of cattle, and the Livestock Exchange, Inc., a major regional cattle auction, has gone into the feedlot business as well. As one of the veterinarians in Superior, Nebraska, put it, "Our town is doing business differently today. If you don't change the way you think, your business will decline."

Adding value to agriculture. Agricultural industry has experienced a well documented metamorphosis during this century. Production has skyrocketed as farm population has plummeted, though the 1990 Census shows that the long term decline in farm population has recently leveled off.[50] Economists believe that US and Great Plains agriculture can remain competitive on the world market, but growth will depend on sparking trade[51] or capitalizing on productivity to lower production and transportation costs.[52] Both the academic and popular press report initiatives to increase the value added in agricultural products,[53] including studies by the National Association of Towns and Townships of mushrooms in Park River, North Dakota,[54] and *The Dallas Morning News* reports on organically grown and processed grain from a homemade co-op mill in Leoti, Kansas.[55]

In Brush, Colorado Power Partners (CPP) is a new company that operates a cogeneration plant that generates and sells electricity to the Colorado Public Service Company. Using the steam heat from the cogeneration plant for its 18-acre greenhouse, CPP also raises and sells tomatoes in major urban markets all over the US. It is currently developing 25 additional acres of greenhouses, part of which will be used to raise melons for the Japanese market.

Food processing has long been a method of adding value to agriculture, but processing food for multiple specialty products or for niche markets is a New Economy trend. The Mid-America Dairyman Plant in Superior, Nebraska, for example, has developed a line of specialized products for specific niche markets such as pizza franchise businesses. The Superior cheese plant also serves as the company's new product development research facility. In Brush, CPP is working with the community to develop a salsa production facility that can be integrated into the production cycles of the greenhouses.

Small businesses, many jobs. The average farm today is a professionally run small business, requiring advanced management and capital resources. Small businesses, those with under 100 employees, are the lifeblood of the American economy. *The Western Planner* highlighted small business in Montana, which offset 4,000 corporate jobs lost in the 1980s with 6,200 new jobs.[56] According to a study conducted for US WEST Communications in 1991, small businesses in the West employed more than half (52.4 percent) of all workers in 1988-1990 and created new jobs at more than twice the rate of large firms.[57] Not only do small firms create jobs, but they offer the flexibility for rapid change and "niche" marketing.

Entrepreneurism is also alive and well in successful small communities in the Great Plains. Throughout the region there is evidence of new business start-ups, new

Throughout the region there is evidence of new business start-ups, new products and services by existing business and innovative ways of responding to changes in the business climate.

products and services by existing business and innovative ways of responding to changes in the business climate. Our case studies of Superior, Nebraska, and Brush, Colorado, strongly reflect this entrepreneurial climate as do the analytical studies of job creation by David Birch. Cottage craft industries are flourishing in both communities. Many retailers, for example, have expanded their businesses to include new types of products or services, and a number of small entrepreneurs are running two or three separate businesses. As one Brush businessman noted, "Everybody in Brush has more than one thing."

Technology. Technology is driving change in the 1990s as it has been since the invention of the wheel and the sailing ship. One of the most important of the new technologies is telecommunications. Nebraska's leaders have taken advantage of opportunities created by the deregulation of telecommunications to add more than 10,000 jobs in Omaha alone in the past few years.[58] Progressive visionaries are taking a similar approach in places across the Plains. Linton, North Dakota, population 1,460, houses back office operations for a national travel agency.[59] Civic leaders in Lusk, Wyoming, population 1,504, have decided to spend their economic development budget to upgrade the community's telecommunications capabilities by cost-sharing the installation of digital switches with the local provider of telephone services, rather than taking out ads in national magazines to tout the wonders of eastern Wyoming. Oberlin, Kansas, population 2,387, is building a community-owned fiber-optic teleconferencing facility. Grain elevators and grocery stores use technology—scanners, satellites—to replace many of the jobs so necessary only a few years ago. Telecommunications and other advanced technologies are transforming all aspects of our lives, not just so-called "high-tech" industries.[60]

Other technologies are making a major impact on the Plains. Biotechnology's impact on animal husbandry and the ability of farmers and ranchers to breed healthier and more productive foodstock is well established. Cryogenics (the science of freezing) and the science of packaging have been combined at the University of Nebraska in concert with industry to create a whole new industry producing quality (some say "gourmet") frozen foods for domestic and international markets. Production technologies are also making an impact. In producing cattle feeders, Mohrlang Industries in Brush, Colorado, uses a numerically controlled machine press and a plasma cutter. The Mid-America Dairyman cheese plant in Superior, Nebraska, not only uses biogenetic advances to process mozzarella cheese, but has also invented unique production line equipment to keep ahead of the competition. In its greenhouses in Brush, CPP has adapted a Danish growing system which combines new hydroponic techniques with organic nutrient systems that avoid the use of pesticides and herbicides, and also uses the latest in sensor technology in its sorting and packaging process.

Global trade. Technological advances open the door to trade in the global village.[61] Emerging organizations, such as the Red River Trade Corridor (linking portions of Minnesota, North Dakota and Manitoba) and the Rocky Mountain Trade Corridor (linking Alberta, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico and Mexico) are building on new opportunities of expanding markets in an increasingly borderless economy.[62] Our case studies provide numerous examples, especially in agriculture and agriculture-related products: grain from Superior, Nebraska, to Asia and Mexico; melons from Brush, Colorado, to Japan; cattle feeders from Brush, Colorado, to Australia, Japan, the former Soviet Union and China. Globalization has

also touched very small businesses and cottage industries: electric motors from New Mexico to Africa; snow helmet breath reflectors from Minnesota to Europe; Southwest Indian arts from New Mexico to Japan and Europe; specialty dolls from Nebraska to Europe; art work from Colorado to Europe and Japan; and specialty foods from Texas and New Mexico to the Far East.

As well, some jobs that were lost overseas are coming back home, says *Fortune* magazine, as business seeks quicker design-to-production cycles, higher quality and better service to customers.[63] Firms operating in rural areas need not be excluded from the international arena, as the level of exports originating in a place "bears little relation to the size of the urban area in which they originate."[64]

Tourism. With $2.1 trillion spent on all forms of recreation industries in 1988, tourism is the world's largest industry. Given the explosive growth in world tourism, the prospects for further expansion are excellent. Tourism has always been important to the economies of western states. In the past decade, however, tourism has become more significant. In 1987,[65] travel-related spending reached $82.4 billion in the 19 western and Great Plains states. Over the next 50 years, demands for all types of recreation are expected to place a larger demand on public lands which, in 1989, recorded a 1.8 billion visitors to recreation, parks, parkways and historical sites. The majority of public lands are in the Great Plains and the western region. And as tourism grows, more people are rediscovering the value of places in the Plains: the International Peace Gardens, Little Bighorn National Monument, Dodge City, Mount Rushmore and Carlsbad Caverns; musicals at Medora, fishing at Fort Peck, Lady Vesty Days in Superior, rodeo in Brush and many others.

Understanding the New Economy is mandatory for those wishing to shape public policy and the political economy.

The New Economy Revolution

The Great Plains region was settled during the economic and social transition called the Industrial Revolution. Now, another transition—the Information Revolution—is causing great and sometimes troubling change in the region as the economy adjusts to what Alvin Toffler calls "demassification." But demassification, decentralization, the rise of niche markets and other characteristics of the New Economy are not indicators of decline. They are indicators of radical change, and they require citizens and leaders to deal with the transformation to a different economic reality. Understanding the New Economy is mandatory for those wishing to shape public policy and the political economy.

A Changing Role for Government

"Progress will only be achieved by a positive attitude combined with hard work, good planning and an inherent belief in the ability of the citizens of Brush to make a difference."
—James C. Collard, 1991[66]

Smaller budgets, shifting priorities, increasing and rapidly changing markets, loss of consumer confidence and the growth of grassroots civic leadership—the many changes occurring in America—are radically transforming the role of government institutions in economic and community development.

As is the case for business, government must learn to respond to new markets and to market niches—and do it with fewer resources. The old one-size-fits-all approach will no longer work.

The fact of shrinking federal expenditures on economic development is everyday knowledge, as are the public debates over spending priorities. As social activism reemerges and pressure grows to increase government funding of some human services while reducing the budget deficit,[67] federal funding for traditional economic development activities will likely continue to decrease. As the federal role continues to decline, demands increase for local and, especially, state government to restructure their functions in economic development. At the same time, state and local government face increased demands for human services, especially in health and education.

Public agencies are becoming more aware that their "market" is diverse and ever changing. Buffalo, Wyoming, is not Grand Forks, North Dakota, and Burlington, Colorado, faces different challenges than Yuma, Colorado. Cookie-cutter programs, less costly than tailored-to-fit solutions, won't work. As is the case for business, government must learn to respond to new markets and to market niches—and do it with fewer resources. The old one-size-fits-all approach will no longer work.

There is growing evidence nationally of citizen disillusionment with the political process and public institutions: calls for term limitations and other political reforms; polls showing that Americans have low regard for and expectations of Congress and the White House; studies by respected private foundations such as the Kettering Foundation that found that the American people are angry with government and feel that it's not doing its job.[68]

We, too, have found evidence at the local level of this "crisis of confidence": People in Superior, Nebraska, who feel that neither the city nor county government cares about the area's future; that they're concerned only with potholes; that they are part of the problem, not part of the solution. A cross-section of economic development practitioners, local officials and tribal representatives from across the region who participated in our survey and roundtable on the future of the Great Plains shared similar complaints. Participants talked of "growing distrust of representative government," the need to "improve leadership in the public sector," a desire for "lean government, providing quality services," "lack of faith in government," the "federal deficit and mismanagement of federal activities," the need to "redirect government resources to domestic issues."

Along with this loss of confidence (or perhaps because of it), Americans are increasingly turning to self-help and to grassroots measures to solve problems. This is evidenced nationally, for example, by the explosion in grassroots law-making: in 1990, citizen petitions made the ballot 72 times—the most since a record 74 petitions in 1932.[69] Numerous studies, including ours, have found substantial evidence at the local level that communities, having learned that they can't rely on someone else to come in and save them, are now learning that they can achieve self determination through grassroots leadership and by mobilizing and redirecting existing resources.

The Main Street program of the Natural Trust for Historic Preservation is a timely example of local initiative, with state, federal and nonprofit players in an important support role.[70] Since 1983, 187 communities in 10 states in our Great Plains study area have participated in the program, reviving moribund downtowns, helping to

save important historic resources and prompting local reinvestment. Communities compete to participate in the program and are primarily responsible for its support.

A New Localism

This "New Localism"[71] is also spurred by the growing understanding of two maxims: First, economic development is everybody's business, not just government's. Second, even though economies are becoming globalized, economies are still local. Thus, New Localism in the New Economy means that *local areas must take responsibility for their own economic well-being and find their own niches in the changing global market.*

These changes are redefining the role of local government and the roles of state and federal government in the following ways:[72]

Some states are creating programs that reflect a redefined role. These programs combine leadership training with a self-help approach to local economic development.

First, **as the role of government diminishes, the role and influence of civic leadership increases, especially at the local level.** The public has a lot of ways to do its business, and government is only one. Civic leadership is required at the local, state and multistate levels. However, civic leadership is broader than government. Civic leadership includes people by virtue of their personal attributes, not just the positions they hold. People are respected because of their knowledge or skills, their commitment to the commonweal, their rectitude and the respect they receive from the community, their past performance on behalf of the community.

Civic leaders come from all ranks of the community: business, the voluntary sector, religion, education, labor and government. Government is a secondary, but still important, asset and may or may not be part of a civic leadership group. With declining confidence in government, however, community leadership increasingly originates with civic leadership coalitions—where government is but one among equals—and less with government acting alone.

Patterns of state and federal government involvement in economic development vary substantially in the Great Plains region. Progressive communities don't ignore financial and technical assistance, and they will even take advice. But, with the exception of funding for infrastructure, there is decreasing dependence on state and federal resources, and there is often reluctance to take advantage of assistance if the community perceives that taking the resources means some loss of local control.

The role of local government in economic development in the Great Plains also varies. In some towns, as in Superior, Nebraska, local government is in the background, providing for water and roads but not acting as part of the community's leadership. In other places—as in Post, Texas, where the mayor is the driving force among a local leadership that includes cattle ranchers and oil people—it is the major impetus for development. In still other communities, leadership is shared among local government, community and business leaders, as in Brush, Colorado.

Local institutions and community leadership are key to economic development. "Today, given the fundamental restructuring of the economy," contends Joseph Luther, "the economic viability of rural communities will depend significantly upon the entrepreneurial abilities of its community leaders."[73] Strengthening local education, creating local jobs, and improving local health care will occur because local citizens are motivated and have the skills and resources necessary to make local devel-

opment succeed.[74] Our review of state economic development strategies indicates that the Great Plains states recognize this: most are stressing local capacity building and leadership development.

Second, **government can play a responsive, supportive role as a catalyst and mobilizer of resources.** A state economic development agency, for example, must understand that (a) the marketplace for government services is changing rapidly and is redefining itself; (b) the agency must respond to the redefined market; (c) the agency can maintain neither the range nor the volume of services and skills needed for such a diverse and rapidly changing market; and, therefore, (d) the agency must redefine its role to be a catalyst, not a doer; a mobilizer of information, technical and even financial resources, not a provider; a broker among stakeholders.

The issue is to respond in ways that best meet the current needs of the diverse and ever-changing market, and that response may be made by public, private or nonprofit entities.

Talking about the transformation of economic development strategies, Doug Ross (Corporation for Enterprise Development/CfED) describes the role of government as "catalyst to create markets and motivate private sector responses to community needs."[75] William Schweke (CfED) and Graham Toft (Indiana Economic Development Council) agree, explaining that the New Localism views government as the "exclusive provider of public services only...when other actors cannot be induced to step in" or where public involvement is essential.[76]

The University of Kansas' Institute of Public Policy and Business Research finds that the state can act best as a catalyst and facilitator. In this role, it creates a common ground and brings all parties together. Rather than delivering services directly, it concentrates on innovative government to stimulate market solutions.[77]

As illustrated by programs like START in Nebraska, PRIDE in Kansas, INITIATIVES in Colorado and GOLD in South Dakota, some states are creating programs that reflect a redefined role. These programs combine leadership training with a self-help approach to local economic development, and action plans are produced by the communities, not by the state. Most Great Plains states have programmatic efforts to involve post-secondary institutions in assisting businesses and communities. A number have also created incentive-type grant and loan programs or public-private financial institutions that encourage more private sector and community investment.

Third, **the New Economy requires "bringing the marketplace to government."** The issue is to respond in ways that best meet the current needs of the diverse and ever-changing market, and that response may be made by public, private or nonprofit entities. It is to create a policy, regulatory and fiscal environment that encourages communities and their constituents to respond to market forces in innovative ways.

Economic development is everybody's business—chambers of commerce, universities, nonprofits, government agencies, school boards. Tackling the obstacles that constrain economic vitality requires the creation of more and better public-private partnerships, in which each partner is positioned to do what it does best and all partners function as an integrated team to effectively address complex needs.[78]

Doug Ross shows that progressive economic development programs—what he calls Third Wave Strategies—are characterized by (1) leverage and engagement: leverage to obtain private sector and other resources and engagement to obtain the active involvement of those resources; (2) competition; (3) integration through markets rather than through agency coordination; and (4) increased accountability by using market principles and the private sector to check the effectiveness of government programs.[79]

Simply put, bringing the marketplace to government means letting go of the need to call all the shots. It means allowing, even encouraging, a job to be done by whatever agencies or companies or organizations can do it most effectively. It means being a partner, not a boss.

"The attitude of the people determines if they make lemonade out of lemons."

Roaring Springs, Texas, and other Panhandle communities, for example, benefit from a remarkable partnership. Southwest Public Service Company (SPS) is a multistate utility committed to helping the communities in its service area. In the Texas Panhandle it has teamed with the South Plains Association of Governments (SPAG), an aggressive service organization, to provide hands-on, how-to-do-it-yourself assistance to small towns. The State of Texas is aware of and complimentary of—but not a part of—the SPS-SPAG-communities partnership.

There are, however, serious obstacles to being both an enabler and a partner. As the federal government has reduced its involvement in local economic development and states have increased theirs, patterns of top down assistance have passed from the federal to the state level. The obstacles are revealed in state policy and program designs which too often fail to reflect local policies and strategies. Further, state program delivery mechanisms are dominated by selection criteria that reflect state priorities and by funding cycles and conditions that limit local control. Communities are required to respond to state priorities. States are not required to respond to community priorities. That's a problem.

Unfortunately in this age of demassification, there are few incentives in our political system for enabling others to be successful. Doers, not enablers, get the credit in politics. There are even fewer incentives to share or devolve power in a political system.

Finally, **government should be a cheerleader, in the business of providing hope.** By finding success stories, for example, and sharing cases of communities that are succeeding, government can help other communities believe that people working together can affect their own destiny, that community self-determination is a prerequisite of achievement.

Vicki Luther and Milan Wall of the Heartland Center for Leadership Development report in their sixth edition of *Clues to Rural Community Survival* that "positive information is highly motivating," noting that their case studies were developed, in part, to "provide an alternative, positive perspective on rural communities that might contrast with the 'dying community' image that has become commonly accepted."[80]

Participants in both our roundtable and written survey of the future of the region agreed that *changes in public attitudes* is one of the most important steps needed for

communities to realize an optimistic future. *Attitude*, for participants, included factors such as "community pride," "higher esteem," "a more positive, progressive outlook," and "pride in the Plains." Poverty models and models of distress do not help a community get hold of its destiny. They must be replaced by models of hope and achievement that illuminate and inspire and provide a basis for actionable initiatives.

The two communities in our case studies and the 12 towns in our profiles survey, although widely different in most respects, share a strong sense of community pride, a recognition of and belief in the worth of the community and a determination to survive. One local businessman told us, "We'll be here in 15 years. People wouldn't want to live anywhere else." In another town, an elected official perhaps best summed it up: "The attitude of the people determines if they make lemonade out of lemons."

Living Up to Your Promise

In the introduction to this report, we stated our belief that words matter because "words can create a self-fulfilling prophecy." We also noted that communities in the Great Plains are threatened by prophecies of irreversible decline. Conversely, we believe it is an obligation of the policy sciences—both analysts and practitioners—to demonstrate the potential for improvement and to encourage possibility thinking. Both state and local government can be important forces in helping communities see their strengths, encouraging community pride and helping local leaders build self-confidence, igniting the can-do spirit that makes things work.

Successful communities tend to be strategic and pragmatic. They tend to help each other and get help wherever they can.

Interdependence of Community and Economic Development

> *"Creating employment opportunities or expanding tax bases are not the mission of the economic development profession: building better communities is."*
>
> —*Mark D. Waterhouse, 1991*[81]

The natural instinct of professionals is to protect their turf. Managers manage, planners plan and leaders lead. Some problems, however, don't lend themselves to neat functional distinctions. Problems of economic change and community disintegration certainly fit in this category. People are increasingly beginning to realize that the complex problems we face require somebody to "put Humpty Dumpty together again." There is growing consensus in the literature about the interdependence of economic and community development.[82] "The answer to the question, 'can economic and community development be separated?' is a resounding no."[83] Yet, for the past 30 years:

- Economic development has been jobs and taxes. Community development has been citizen participation and incorporation of the poor and minorities into the "good life."
- Economic development has been making the pie bigger; community development has been distributing the pie more equitably.

- Economic development has been about infrastructure (public works Democrats) and business expansion (private sector Republicans). Community development has been about human services and the environment.
- Economic development has been largely place oriented; community development has been largely people oriented.

For people and communities in the Great Plains, the issue is often survival. And people react to survival issues in unexpected ways. Survivors tend to be strategic and pragmatic. They tend to help each other and get help wherever they can. And, people in a survival mode don't make overly subtle distinctions.

People in successful communities seem to realize instinctively that they are responsible for but not in control of their future.

Community leadership

In both the literature and our field research, we found that successful communities may have one or several leadership groups. They go by many names—Economic Development Councils or Community Development Corporations—but their activities and approaches are similar.

Successful **communities do not limit themselves to a narrow set of activities or problems.** They try to lure tourists, businesses, health practitioners, state grants and technical assistance programs; to improve their schools, streets, television and telephone services; to clean up their downtown and help existing businesses; and to find ways to work together. In sum, they try to do what needs to be done and what can be done, and they realize that one type of improvement can affect the whole community and can lead to other types of improvements.

Successful **communities are into prosperity and vitality as much as growth.** Civic leaders don't talk about the growth indicators that economists always use. They talk about "improvements" and "making progress" and other words and phrases that relate more to quality of life than growth. They are into changing for the *better*—not necessarily changing for the *more*. Their actions are aimed at incremental improvements and adding value to existing assets. As they work to improve health care, they also realize that providing adequate health care *may* bring jobs, talented people and new markets to the community, but it will certainly help the community retain what it has. Rarely did we find examples of a grand strategy. People in successful communities seem to realize instinctively that they are responsible for but not in control of their future. But they are firmly convinced that, by rolling with the punches, adapting and changing, they can have a positive and significant impact on shaping the community's future.

Successful places have **leaders who tend to see development as everybody's business.**[84] Participants in the Main Street program found that, though formed as a downtown program, Main Street leaders were soon involved in preservation and development in the entire community.[85] The desire to survive and prosper encourages inclusion and accommodation. Such a process is seldom neat, orderly or harmonious. More often, it is messy, chaotic and controversial. Like democracy, it may not be efficient, but it is usually very effective.

Small towns are not big cities written small

The most obvious characteristic of small communities is their size: they are small. Ironically, much of the traditional literature of the 70s and 80s on rural America and rural development seems to ignore some of fundamental implications of this fact.

In small towns, the morning coffee is more important than the courthouse in resolving disputes about public policy.

The primary implication is that small entities are very different from large entities. Those differences are significantly more important than the similarities. Business schools, accounting firms, banks and government agencies are beginning to understand the importance of scale: small business is not just big business written small. As well, those interested in understanding, assessing future prospects, developing public policies or designing assistance programs need to learn that small towns are not just big cities written small. Some of the crucial differences are assets; some are liabilities.

Much has been made of the *liabilities* of smallness: real ones—like the lack of redundancy in skills and services, the lack of diversity in the economic base and the outmigration of young people; and the imputed ones—like isolation, information deprivation, lack of technological sophistication and lack of a skilled work force.

Not much attention has been paid to the assets of smallness and how those assets have contributed to the success of these communities. Small towns are simpler worlds. As in a tribe, there is less functional differentiation. Small changes have relatively greater impacts in small towns. The downside of this is that smaller communities are more vulnerable to outside forces. The upside is that there are fewer, though not necessarily lesser, obstacles to change. And dealing with these obstacles is simpler, though not necessarily easier. Small town life is simply more manageable.

Moreover, unlike large cities, people in small towns are more interdependent and dependent upon the community. As a result, volunteerism in small towns tends to be stronger and to have greater impact. Life is more personal. There is less privacy and more accountability because everyone knows everyone, and people are held to account for their behavior. Action is less constrained by impersonal bureaucratic interpretations of rules and procedures.

Leaders in small towns lack economies of scale but gain in economies of scope: fewer people know more about what is going on. Action is also less constrained by institutional fragmentation. Although personalities and political conflicts can and do play a significant role in small towns, conflicts are managed and often resolved through personal rather than institutional methods of conflict resolution. Put another way, the morning "coffee" is more important than the courthouse in resolving disputes about public policy. Both Superior, Nebraska, and Brush, Colorado, had serious problems in the mid to late 1980s. But both were able to rally their people, develop cooperative action and substantially impact their economic future in a very short period of time. An equivalent process with an equivalent outcome is hard to imagine in a large city. Small scale simply provides leaders more leverage.

A new approach

Old paradigms for community and economic development have never been very relevant to small towns. Programs based on those paradigms have not been very successful. More relevant are elements of an emerging new paradigm:

First, **an integrated approach to development is required.** As one observer puts it, "The community must concern itself **deeply** with development of the **total community**, and not simply with the development of one element or the other."[86]

In big cities, this approach may be theoretically correct and practically unachievable. But it is achievable in small towns because they enjoy economies of scope.

Second, **a broader range and different mix of indicators must be used to plan and assess economic and community development.** Quality of life considerations—including education, health services, and recreational and cultural amenities—are coming to play a larger role in even traditional industrial development. Lifestyle has ranked first on the list of corporate location decision criteria since 1988.[87] In a small community, quality of life and economic indicators are not only more dynamically interdependent, but, in many cases, they merge. Quality of life variables "are inputs to as well as products of economic well being."[88]

Libraries can be vital information sources for businesses and professionals and provide electronic links to the entire world, an entirely new way to carry out a traditional function.

Health care institutions, education and libraries, for example, affect workforce quality, are major employers, attract new economic activity, employ professionals who are community leadership assets, and provide important services to new and growing business enterprises. School facilities and equipment are assets that can be used to support economic programs and activities. Libraries can be vital information sources for businesses and professionals and provide electronic links to the entire world, an entirely new way to carry out a traditional function. Information and telecommunications technologies contribute to the quality of life and to new economic possibilities for the community.

Conversely, economic factors are also quality of life factors. Economic activity not only provides the tax base for community services and contributes to community stability, it also leads to personal identity, personal satisfaction, status in the community, stake in the social/political system and civic consciousness.[89]

Third, the integrated approach requires **mixed development strategies based on realistic assessments of assets and reasonable expectations about possible futures.** Successful communities don't put all their eggs in one basket. They do the do-able, not necessarily the ideal or most needed. Much of the recent literature recognizes that a successful development strategy inventories community assets and liabilities and calls for a portfolio of tools. Included in that portfolio are business recruitment, business retention and expansion, new business formation, tourism development, leadership development, pollution prevention and environmental protection and improvement, physical infrastructure development, capital formation and human services development. Most significantly, there is less emphasis on the abstract comparison of one development tool to another and much more emphasis on the selection of a mix of tools based on the assets and needs of a specific community at a specific point in its development cycle.[90]

Ironically, the top down and functional program approach typically used by federal and state agencies, and even private foundations, often makes it difficult for communities to integrate help from those programs into their development strategies. Reason: Programs fragment, but problem solvers in a political environment integrate. They are two different worlds, the programmers and the problem solvers.

A new paradigm is emerging. Characteristics: An integrated, broad-based, place-oriented approach using a mixed bag of tools combining the best of community and economic development.

Relationship Between Community and Place [91]

"When place changes rapidly people no longer 'know how to behave.' They must expend effort to test and choose a new form of behavior and to build group agreements."
—*Kevin Lynch, 1972*[92]

The Great Plains, to a greater degree than other regions, was settled on the grand plan of a "central place hierarchy," under which larger places controlled smaller places through the railroads.[93] Railroads were the lifelines of small communities, their main connection to the outside world. Towns collected goods from the surrounding countryside and sent them on up the line relatively untouched. They had no choice; the railroad determined how many towns would be built and where. The railroad was the only game in town.

Technology enables communities to break away from the old economy hierarchy and redefine their place in the New Economy.

The automobile and truck drove the first stake into the heart of the monopolistic railroad system that shaped the settlement of the Plains. New technology, especially in telecommunications and transportation, has changed the economic and social rationale for the existence of many towns across the Plains. Reason: Technology enables communities to break away from the old economy hierarchy and redefine their place in the New Economy.

Rutgers University historian Robert Fishman, in a provocative 1990 *Wilson Quarterly* article,[94] describes how the suburbs of America's biggest cities have broken the dominance of central cities. The cities and towns of the Great Plains are making a similar break from the hierarchical dominance of major metropolitan centers, to build their own worlds from a variety of choices—an extended web of networks organized around the activities of everyday life, such as job, family life and recreation.

New growth and vitality in the second tier of cities (metro size, but not among the Super Cities) is following the well-documented boom in the suburbs of the nation's largest cities during the last decade.[95] While older smokestack cities of the industrial northeast and midwest stagnate, "young upstarts" such as Wichita, Albuquerque, Des Moines, Sioux Falls, Grand Forks and Fargo are taking the lead.[96] And these cities can't rest on past accomplishments, because "micropolitan" growth centers of 15-50,000—places like Ponca City, Oklahoma, and Manhattan, Kansas—are fast on their heels.[97] Jack Lessinger has chronicled the movement of Americans that, he believes, is fueling this trend, a new migration of people who seek to escape the constraints of life in the Super Cities.[98]

Business consultant David Heenan, in his 1991 book, *The New Corporate Frontier: The Big Move to Small Town, USA*, unites economic and business trends with growth in secondary cities. Heenan focuses on places—freestanding cities—of 50,000 to 200,000 like Colorado Springs and Fort Collins, Colorado; or Des Moines, Iowa. He is careful to distinguish this "big move" from the so-called "rural renaissance" of the 1970s—this move is "being instigated by ambitious, career-oriented professionals... searching for a serious business environment,"[99] the same "new bourgeoisie" that Paul Knox[100] of Virginia Polytech contends led the dramatic growth of the 1980s.

The New Economy revolution is transforming how people relate to each other spatially, how they make and use towns and cities. We have seen two ways in which

communities are transcending the limitations of place. One we have labeled "communities of networks," and the other we have called "communities of places."

Communities of Networks

We see the New Economy affecting the structure of the urban system. As a result, the "archipelago society," which already describes the Great Plains, is increasingly descriptive of the relationship of cities and towns nationwide. An archipelago society supports "island-like communities,"[101] different types and sizes of places, connected to each other in networks across time and space. *The Christian Science Monitor* has reported on the way in which technological innovations such as the personal computer and fax machine link even the most "rural" into the national and global economic system.[102] These linkages provide the ties that strengthen communities and create opportunity and wealth.

The rise or decline of the Great Plains region, we believe, will depend primarily on the health and vitality of its cities and towns.

The rise or decline of the Great Plains region, we believe, will depend primarily on the health and vitality of its cities and towns. In the New Economy, healthy cities and towns promote rural vitality. Villages do well when larger towns to which they are linked do well.[103] These linkages are not always with the nearest places nor only with the center occupying the next higher slot, as in the old central place hierarchy. A more useful image is Fishman's extended web of networks.

Communities participating in the New Economy have moved closer to a "communities of networks" model as many of the costs of distance have been reduced.[104] Fishman identifies three networks—Household, Consumption and Workplace—the people we socialize with, buy things and services from and work with. These three sectors of our socio-economic life are increasingly independent of each other and increasingly less dependent on place.

As we apply these ideas, consider the following. All towns and cities have a hinterland, an area from which they draw labor, capital or other resources. Cities and towns also have a backyard, a contiguous area surrounding the urban place. In the past, the hinterland and the backyard were usually the same place. Today, the backyard and the hinterland are often two different places.

The hinterland, the area that a place depends upon for resource inputs and the distribution of goods, is analogous to Fishman's communities of production and consumption. In the 19th century, a town's hinterland was quite closely aligned with the central place hierarchy and generally limited to a contiguous region, what we call the backyard.[105] Today, a **fracture** has occurred between the **hinterland** and the **backyard**, though not always and not everywhere.

This fracture can be seen if we compare the old and new economies. In the old economy, grain elevators in small market towns purchased local crops with imported capital and sent them to large milling towns for processing. Then bread came back to the market town and was sold to farmers living nearby in the town's backyard. Today, the same town is likely to be dependent on manufacturing, traded services, retiree spending from transfer payments or pension funds, tourism or a mixture of these new sectors.[106] Thus, the town draws resources from around the state, region or nation to provide goods and services to national and international as well as local markets. The only resource the town may draw from its own

backyard is a labor force—people to work in the town. The region and even the world are now its hinterland.

Basic functions originally allocated to the smallest villages—buying produce and selling basic supplies—have been reallocated by "progress" to larger centers farther away from rural producers and consumers and closer to the majority urban population.[107] One need only mention the name "Wal-Mart" in many small towns across the Plains to find an opinion of the costs and benefits of this change.[108] In many cases, these central functions have been reallocated not only to places across county lines (as is the case with Wal-Mart), but also across national or even global lines.[109] Credit cards are an excellent example: a merchant in Superior, Nebraska, accepts a customer's New York Citibank Visa card and is paid from Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

An archipelago network model is replacing the central place hierarchy, breaking down traditional distinctions between urban and rural. Every place can now be "someplace."

In the New Economy, the advantages of location—what some people call "place"—are rapidly diminishing. In the old days, location on a railhead or interstate was tantamount to success. Today, forces in the New Economy—especially new transportation and telecommunications technologies, including information and computer technologies (what some people call "telecomputing")—are bringing new advantages to formerly isolated places. The New Economy is a great equalizer. Examples: health care experts in Brush, Colorado, consult overseas, and Japanese firms run grain elevators in Superior, Nebraska. When one thinks of high-technology firms, one usually thinks of the Silicon Valley of California or the Route 128 Corridor around Boston. Yet, Great Plains Software, Inc., calls Fargo, North Dakota, home, and Mortek Industries manufactures telecommunications equipment in Brush, Colorado, for a global market. Along the Front Range of Colorado and New Mexico, NCR, Hewlett-Packard, Digital, Intel, IBM and Apple Computer make products for global markets.

An archipelago network model is replacing the central place hierarchy, breaking down traditional distinctions between urban and rural. *Every place can now be "someplace," depending to some extent on connections to urban hubs and Super Cities, but primarily on the quality of telecommunications and transportation infrastructure and the quality of local leadership.* The linkage of people and their communities has changed as well, from a rigid hierarchy to a continuum. "Places are nodes in the network, and may be part of different networks depending on the function."[110]

Communities of Places

In the middle of the rolling sand hills of Nebraska, a quiet revolution is taking place.

It's called cooperation.

Custer County sits off of the beaten path, just north of I-80 in central Nebraska. Residents are not sitting around complaining about the region's farm economy, nor blaming Broken Bow, the county seat, for siphoning off business from the neighboring small towns. Instead, Custer County residents have recognized that the "community" is larger than the place they inhabit. Joining together in a "barnraising" type of cooperative effort, county residents have embraced "NEST Builders," Broken Bow's economic development organization which now works for a cluster of county towns.

The traditional ideal of "community" has been a town which occupied a place that was contiguous and compact and included a supportive hinterland/backyard, the combination of which was self-sufficient. As we have noted, the rise of the New Economy and the increasing disconnection of the hinterland from the backyard are changing the very structure of community.

There are many interpretations of this change. In one version, small communities die out as the people move to larger communities through what is viewed by the "rationalists"—including many economists, planners and public administrators—as a long and "natural" process of urbanization.

The small town can be a neighborhood in the regional urban network—reflecting the changing face of the neighborhood and the changing patterns of travel among the activites of household, consumption and workplace.

Another version weaves a dreary story of a small town in continuing decline, a "whatmighthavebeen" place.[111] In this version the ideal town is inevitably replaced by a residential enclave whose stores have closed, leaving hardy citizens with a 30-mile/30-minute drive to the nearest larger town. "The need for little places disappeared," concludes US Department of Agriculture demographer Calvin Beale.[112]

A third interpretation recognizes the importance of community within the regional framework and the need for cooperation at the regional level. This version understands that many of the problems that change poses to small towns are also urban problems: In many traffic-clogged cities, residents often travel as long (in time if not distance) to go to work, to shop or to go to a movie. Except for the occasional Stop-'n'-Go or 7-11, commercial trade has left the neighborhoods of *both* town and country. But, as a team from the University of Minnesota recently put it, "Loss of trade functions does not necessarily lead to loss of community."[113] This view, for example, believes that the small town can be a neighborhood in the regional urban network—reflecting the changing face of the neighborhood and the changing patterns of travel among the activites of household, consumption and workplace.

Grassroots leaders across the Plains are overcoming the problems of change through multi-town collaborative "clusters," described by Timothy Borich of Iowa State as "the only serious new idea in rural development."[114] Collaborative clusters are designed to give communities the ability to take advantage of the strengths of the small local place (such as economies of scope, low crime, high volunteerism) and to capitalize on the benefits of larger community clusters (such as economies of scale in marketing tourism sites or purchasing insurance).

Although initially developed in rural Alberta in the 1970s, clusters didn't catch on in the US until the farm crisis of the mid-1980s. The cooperative route is becoming more attractive, says Harold Baker[115] of the University of Saskatchewan, for communities trying to achieve a critical mass of population, economic power and expertise in a "community of communities."

According to Borich, "the majority of the 955 'places' [in Iowa] are involved in clustering," with 78 clusters operating and many more in planning stages.[116] There is great diversity among these clusters in their composition and in the types of activities in which they engage. For example, the Area Community Commonwealth (ACC) cluster outside Mason City, that gained international attention when it landed Walt Disney's 60th anniversary party for Mickey Mouse, includes communities from several counties and conducts a broad range of economic development and tourism activities. The Extreme Northwest Iowa Cluster (ENIC), based in Sib-

ley, also includes communities from several counties but focuses only on recycling activities. The Winterset Incentive Network, Inc. (WIN Inc.), is a cluster of five communities within one county (Madison) that conducts both economic and community development activities. The Main Street program in Iowa is adapting its program to serve existing and emerging clusters.

While the Canadian effort is subsidized by federal money, most US clusters are locally funded from both public and private sources. In Nebraska, Custer County's NEST Builders raised $40,000 for economic development from private sources in just a few weeks.[117] The ACC group in Iowa "netted a $48,000 profit" from the Disney celebration in its first year.[101] Throughout Iowa, funding methods differ according to group need and how the group is organized. For example: ENIC received a Kellogg *grant* of a few hundred dollars; WIN Inc. conducted a multimillion dollar *stock sale*.[119]

Place is different things to different people: the local, physical space; the area of common geographic similarities; the entire region with its own particularities; an arena of shared experiences.

During 1991, a team of researchers from the US and Canada completed case studies of collaborative community clusters in Michigan, Alberta and Nebraska.[120] These communities, which voluntarily united in response to radical changes in their economic base, were able to increase linkages with each other and with outside places and institutions. These "lateral linkages" foster economic growth and innovation, strengthening local networks through trade and information sharing.

Some fear, however, that community collaboration may cripple local organizations, leaving localities vulnerable in the event the regional group dissolves. Nonetheless, civic leaders increasingly look to collaboration to overcome local limitations. Geographer Ronald Swager reports on a 1991 study from the American Economic Development Council which predicts:

> Interregional and interagency cooperation will expand, prompted by the need for local unity, efficiency, and pooling of expertise and viewpoints, by budget considerations, and by increased recognition that functional economic areas encompass multiple jurisdictions. The "team approach" will yield the greatest potential for successful economic development. [121]

Capturing the Spirit of our Place

"Community" is being pulled in two quite different directions. It's being pulled away from real, identifiable places—hometowns, downtowns, Edge Cities and other geographically demarcated places. It's being pulled into communities of networks, including the networks of work, recreation and those identified by Fishman and others. As people move into more fluid and less well defined environments, they are trying to recapture the magic and spirit of the classic community defined by a place. The search for place can be seen in the widespread support for programs like Main Street and the movement to smaller cities chronicled by Heenan, Lessinger and others.

Place is different things to different people: the local, physical space; the area of common geographic similarities; the entire region with its own particularities; an arena of shared experiences. What it is to all people is what they have in common while "engaged in the project of inhabiting a place."[122] Daniel Kemmis urges the citizens of the West to recapture the spirit of their "place" in his 1990 book, *Community and the Politics of Place*.

Kemmis questions what we—all Americans—will now do with the West, this "last best place." "What role will this region and its residents play in the next phase of American history?" Will the Plains become a half-forgotten and exploited colony? Will it become a living museum, a common repository of nostalgia? Will we settle for maintaining the status quo?

The answer, Kemmis proposes, lies in cooperation to build a better place. There must be a "public table," not only to engage the debate on our future but also to improve what we have, to find the shared ground:

> If in fact there is a connection between the places we inhabit and the political culture which our inhabiting of them produces, then perhaps it makes sense to begin with the place, with a sense of what it is, and then try to imagine a way of being public which would fit the place.[123]

If we want to inhabit a place instead of merely stopping on our way through, we need to take on the challenge *of fitting the place—integrating the needs of the place with the activities of everyday life.*

Carl Kraenzel, 40 years ago, urged us to remember the unique assets and liabilities of the Plains, to tailor our way of living to the needs of the Plains. If we want to inhabit a place instead of merely stopping on our way through, we need to take on the *challenge* of fitting the place—integrating the needs of the place with the activities of everyday life. As Bill Hornby observes, we are looking beyond the canyons that divide us—rural, urban, environmental, economic, cultural. "We are beginning to stop yelling and start listening to each other."[124]

The place is ever changing. Communities are adapting to profound economic, social and demographic changes. The role of government—our republican system—is changing. Plains citizens are bringing the "public" back to the "republic" by renewed civic leadership and integrated, total community development. Technology is changing, creating new problems and opportunities for people in communities. The challenge today is to ensure that these changes help reinforce a commitment to place.

The existing urban system of hamlets, towns and cities in the Great Plains was settled for a specific purpose—to serve the railroad's farm-to-market industrial interests and the nation's economic development interests. The advent of new forms of transportation, telecommunications and trade indelibly changed the need for these places, their function, their relationship to each other and their relationship to the hinterland and to the backyard. However, these changes also offer an opportunity for communities to redefine their place. Collaboration toward the shared goal of a better life welds global networks with the spirit of our place, bringing the circle back onto itself.

The Chinese character for "crisis" is a combination of the characters for "danger" and "opportunity." Our research has shown a few ways in which people have sought to build on opportunity, to adapt to the unique place they inhabit and adapt that unique place to a radically changing environment. On the Great Plains—as elsewhere—change is the driving force; we should not mistake change for decline. Similarly, adaptation to change is led by people; leadership is the key.

Summary of Lessons

What will happen to individual communities within the region is a function of their leadership and their ability to understand and adapt to the New Economy.

Our purpose here is to summarize the important things we saw and the key lessons we learned as we looked at everyday life in the Plains. We have presented these findings in "kitchen-table English," without repeating the supporting arguments developed in Chapters 1-3.

As we said in the *Preface* to this report, we have attempted to be true to the preliminary, exploratory nature of our efforts. We make **generalizations**, but they are **tentative**; we list our **impressions**, not our **conclusions**; we discuss **implications**, not **recommendations**. We believe that our impressions and the implications we have drawn merit serious consideration. We believe we have acquired important insights into some of the dynamics of change in the Great Plains region.

We share our insights at this time in the hope that this report will stimulate others to take a new look from a new perspective and will join in developing new tools and new interpretations.

General Impressions

Change, adjustment to change, and uncertainty will characterize economic development in the 1990s.[125]

The region is in transformation, not decline.

The world is a different place from what it was yesterday — we cannot use yesterday's criteria to judge it.

Most Plains people live in towns and cities today. What will happen to those individual communities within the region is a function of their leadership and their ability to understand and adapt to the New Economy.

Look at the micro level.

To understand this transformation, we need to look at the micro level; we need to understand what's happening in individual communities.

If we only look at the aggregate, we lose the dynamics of the community and of the community in relation to its environment. The aggregate too often masks what is truly important.

Community leadership is the sine qua non in determining community survival.

There is, however, no single leadership model.

What's important is that people in the community are in agreement on what the community's future should be and about how to get there. The ability to agree may be more important than the substance of the agreement.

What's important is that people in the community are in agreement on what the community's future should be and about how to get there.

A few people—with leadership skills and the will to act—can make a very big difference.

There must be a determination to survive.

Survivors will be the people who *want* to stay there; they *care* about the community; they will *take steps* to ensure their survival. A hard place demands hardy people.[126]

Know your assets; build on your assets.

New Economy strategies are leading the fight: "Gardening" instead of "Hunting," building on a community's asset base, adding value to local resources, adapting and innovating.

Recognize change, and adapt.

A community's key to the future is adapting to the possibilities created by the New Economy, especially staying abreast of and being able to apply information technologies.

Practice collaboration.

Collaboration requires communities to learn to cooperate, whether in clusters, shared services, joint economic development efforts, or just acknowledging and reacting to economic and social interdependence in a global economy.

Implications for State Policy Makers

There will be a blurring of the boundaries that have traditionally defined the roles of the public sector versus the private sector...[127]

Know your market.

Be responsive to diverse and changing community needs; know the difference between Grants and Gallup.

Act on the belief that cookie-cutter approaches don't work.

Don't rely on traditional indicators to tell you about places in your state; look at leadership, institutions and the activities of everyday life at the local level.

Development is not necessarily a function of population growth; there are many ways a town can grow without getting bigger.

Community and economic development are interdependent, especially in small towns, where quality of life factors are a major asset and sometimes the only source of comparative advantage.

Focus on capacity building; foster bootstraps and grassroots strategies.

Inform communities about the New Economy and its implications, such as opportunities in new markets and the way applications of advanced technologies in electronics, telecomputing and transportation can be used to increase wealth and expand choices.

Assist in assuring that relevant information and expertise on markets, technology, capital and management are available to small communities.

Encourage self-help and self-determination; provide hands-on, how-to-do-it-yourself programs for leadership development, visioning, strategizing and execution.

Get into the business of providing hope. Be a vision lifter. Help leaders to aim high.

Encourage communities to develop a balance sheet approach to self-assessment, to identify and understand both their assets and their liabilities, and to figure out ways to build upon the assets.

Get into the business of providing hope. Be a vision lifter. Help leaders to aim high. Find success stories—real life places and everyday people who are surviving and prospering—and share these examples with towns and communities statewide.

Be a partner, not a boss.

Listen.

Recognize that the state does not call the plays; it only helps with the gameplan.

Forget interventionist policies and programs; forge a new responsive, supportive role.

Be an information and resources broker, not a service provider.

Recognize the worth of civic leadership; accept that you don't have to be at the head of the table—or even at the table.

Focus on what communities *say they need* to be competitive, not what you *think they need*.

Encourage collaboration.

Recognize that economic development is everybody's business and that all have roles to play.

Foster grassroots regionalism and inter-community cooperation, collaboration and joint action.

Bring the marketplace to state government.

Recognize that the state does not have to be, nor should it be, the primary provider of services to communities.

Know that some activities can be performed as well as or better than the state by private companies, nonprofits or other government or quasigovernmental units.

Don't make direct investments in activities someone else can do more effectively.

Develop incentives for others to commit resources through challenge grants, loans and other mechanisms. Consider chambers of commerce, civic groups, professional associations, universities, school boards, foundations and corporations as potential partners.

Stimulate marketplace solutions at the local and regional level.

Stick to your knitting.

Be an expert on the *lay of the land*—its people, its resources, the quality of its infrastructure, its regulatory environment, its quality of life, the efficiency of its government, the adequacy of its public services.

Concentrate on and invest in a knowledge base, physical infrastructure and an amenities base.

Focus on area development by investments in education, roads, airports, telecommunications, sound management of natural resources and the environment, and research and development.

Understand the big picture of the relationship among all the elements of a place and how they affect community development.

Be an expert on the lay of the land—its people, its resources, the quality of its infrastructure, its regulatory environment, its quality of life.

Next Steps: Building on the Lessons

In subsequent phases of the Great Plains Project, we intend to build upon and expand the substantive and methodological insights we developed in Phase 1.

Substantively, we want to **broaden our focus.** Using the same heuristic, field-oriented approach as in this first phase, we plan to look at important *micropolitan areas* and the *major metropolitan cities* that border on but are part of the Great Plains, and to delve more deeply into the **relationships between these urban areas and small towns and rural areas.**

We also want to explore in greater depth the **changing role of place** and the **changing relationship between community and place.** The phenomena of *communities of networks* and new grassroots regionalism (*communities of places*) may be easy to identify, but their nature and interrelationships are more difficult to understand. Their implications for social cohesion and for the viability of communities need in-depth examination. Accordingly, in future studies we will treat these issues as cross-cutting themes, and we will use special field studies to look at them closely. Our aim will be to develop additional insights into these patterns of change and their implications.

Methodologically, we have identified a number of **nontraditional indicators** which we believe offer more reliable clues to the region's future than many traditional indicators. In our case studies and analysis of case study literature, we applied *New Economy variables* such as enterprise development and entrepreneurship (as indicated by new business start-ups, business expansions and innovative business diversifications); new markets (global, national and niche); and information and technology intensity. We also applied *community attitude and leadership variables* such as community pride, community self-investment, participatory approach to decision making and willingness to seek and use outside help.

Telecommunications—and particularly telecomputing—will be vital in attracting talented newcomers and ensuring community survival.

Having used these indicators in a qualitative way in Phase 1, we now have a clearer idea of what to measure, and we believe that **series of quantifiable indicators** can be developed. Our next steps will feature three preliminary attempts to do so:

First, we will experiment with a **multivariate standard-of-living index**, in which the variables have been selected and weighted on the basis of survey data. Such an index was developed for nations, and we believe it can be modified and applied to states and, perhaps, to large and small communities.

Second, applying some of our insights from Phase 1, we will develop a **telecomputing hospitality index** that communities can use to rate their attractiveness to knowledge workers. As we have discussed in this report, *telecommunications*—especially telecomputing—and *attracting talented newcomers* are vital to community survival. Our proposed index will focus on the community assets and attributes that *knowledge workers* (telecommuter entrepreneurs who bring with them contracts and viable businesses) care about. This effort will focus on micropolitan cities, major hamlets, and towns and communities from 2,500 to 50,000 in population.

Third, we will attempt to develop a **model community balance sheet**. The model will include *traditional assets* such as physical, institutional and social infrastructure; tax base; and residential and commercial building values. It will also include so-called *intangible assets* such as information and telecommunications intensity; leadership and determination; and availability of managerial and technical expertise.

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Glossary of Terms

GREAT PLAINS: An area between the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains and the short-grass prairies of the Midwest, more or less defined by Interstates 35 and 25, including part or all of the states of: Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Montana, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas and Wyoming.

ARCHIPELAGO SOCIETY: Urban "islands" surrounded by sparsely populated areas connected to each other by transportation and telecomputing networks. A typical pattern of settlement in harsh natural settings such as the American West, much of Australia or Alaska. Archipelago societies prosper primarily by the quality of the relationships among the urban "islands."

ASSET BASE: Attributes that underlie community economic development—such as quality infrastructure, value of housing stock, aggregate portfolio values, clean air and open spaces, and access to foreign and domestic markets; comparable to the assets on a business *balance sheet*.

BACK-OFFICE OPERATIONS: Management and support tasks that can be performed away from a company's headquarters, such as telemarketing, credit card processing, data file maintenance, and many clerical and accounting functions. In the New Economy, *back-office operations* are an economic development opportunity for small communities that have the appropriate infrastructure (e.g., advanced telecommunications, reliable express mail services). *Back-office operations* and other New Economy phenomena are helping shape a new definition of place, one in which, for example, geographic remoteness is no longer a liability—because of telecommunications and other linkages to the "outside" world.

BACKYARD: The contiguous countryside surrounding a city or town. For many towns, the *backyard* is now primarily a service area. In the old days, the *backyard* was also a *hinterland*, an area upon which a town largely depended for its food supplies, raw material for industries and customers for their products. See also *hinterland*.

BALANCE SHEET APPROACH: A method of community economic assessment that weighs *"assets and liabilities"* (for example, *assets* such as a skilled workforce with strong work ethic vs. *liabilities* such as lack of access to capital or crumbling transportation infrastructure) in addition to more commonly used indicators of *change* (such as population, employment or personal income loss or gain); analogous to the balance sheet of a firm; emphasizes the need to look at stocks as well as flows.

BALANCED GROWTH: An approach to economic growth that weighs the value of wealth creation into other human values—such as environmental or historic preservation, health, well-being or social justice—and attempts to strike a balance between them.

BOOTSTRAPS ACTION: An activity by a group or individuals characterized by "an ability to 'pick themselves up' without a large infusion of outside help." [Fettig, 52] A program can be *bootstraps* without being *grassroots*. For example, the Homestead Act enabled people to help themselves, but originated from and relied on the federal government. See *grassroots*.

BORDERLESS ECONOMY: The constant flow of capital, technology, products, services and people across national borders with little or no interference by the state.

BTUs: British Thermal Units, a standard unit of energy measurement.

BUFFALO COMMONS: A proposal by Rutgers academics Frank and Deborah Popper to deprivatize one-third of the Great Plains and reintroduce natural grasses and buffalo; first published in December 1987.

CENTRAL PLACE THEORY: Central place theory assigns communities to a hierarchy depending whether or not specific goods and services (like bakers, grocers, barbers or doctors) are present in the town or city; based on theories developed by von Thünen, Christaller and Lösch. These hierarchies, built on the old industrial economy, are changing with New Economy developments. See *archipelago society*.

CHURNING: Term used by David Birch to describe the behavior of the microeconomy as firms start up, mature and die.

CITY, PRIMARY: The largest cities and their *metropolitan areas* that exert significant control over other places; about the 12 largest in the US; sometimes called "Super Cities."

CITY, SECONDARY: Other *metropolitan* cities, generally with a population between 50,000 and three million.

CIVIC LEADERSHIP: Civic leadership includes people by virtue of their personal attributes, not just the positions they hold. People are respected because of their knowledge or skills, their commitment to the commonweal, their rectitude and the respect they receive from the community, their past performance on behalf of the community. Civic leaders come from all ranks of the community: business, the voluntary sector, religion, education, labor and government. See also *bootstraps* and *grassroots*.

CLEAN WATER ACT: The Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended by the Water Quality Act of 1987, is the controlling federal legislation for water quality in the US.

CLUSTER: See *multicommunity collaboration*.

COMMONWEAL: For the public good; in the best interests of people; the public interest.

COMMERCIAL CENTER: A place where people can obtain frequently purchased items and services [Anding *et al* 1990]. Not all places are also commercial centers. See *central place theory*.

COMMUNITY: Traditionally, "a group of people in a physical setting with geographic, political and social boundaries and with discernible communication linkages." [Shaffer 1989, 3] In this report, a town, an area or several towns or a group of people having common interests or linkages (e.g., economic, social, cultural, electronic, technological) without regard for jurisdictional boundaries, as in communities of interest, *communities of networks* or *communities of places*.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: "A process through which a community attempts to improve the social, economic and cultural situation." [J. A. Christensen from Lapping, Daniels and Keller 1989, 282]

COMMUNITY OF NETWORKS: Fishman's idea [1990, 39] of how people interact, along *networks* defined by household, workplace and consumption contacts. These networks are emerging as people and economies become less dependent on central places, using telecommunications, computer databases and transportation to interact.

COOKIE-CUTTER [approach]: Strategies, plans or programs that treat all regions, towns or people as if they were identical; standardized; not allowing for individual differences. We believe that cookie-cutter solutions don't work, and we encourage states to "know their market," to recognize the uniqueness of communities.

CREATIVE DESTRUCTION: Term coined early in this century by economist Joseph Schumpeter to describe the process of economic "*churning*" in which many firms die each year as many new firms are born and others grow and expand. This *churning* is a primary source of creativity and efficiency in a capitalist system; it is the way deadwood is cleared out of the system.

DIGITAL SWITCHING: Modern method of telecommunications control which replaced mechanical switching for routing telephone calls. Digital switches are required for enhanced telephone services, such as call waiting, call forwarding and voice mail, and improve the user's ability to use fax, modems and other advanced telecommunications services.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (e.d.): Traditionally, a process to create jobs and enlarge the tax base. Its focus has been industrial recruitment. We see e.d. as an ongoing process of mobilizing resources to instill hope, increase wealth and expand choices. E.d. in the New Economy means more than just *hunting* (industrial recruitment) or building roads and sewers. It means an integrated and strategic policy that encourages people and firms to respond to market forces in innovative ways, thereby creating new products and services, new jobs and expanded wealth.

ECONOMIC DISTRESS: Term traditionally used to identify a place with shrinking population, employment or income. More accurately, a place with shrinking hope, wealth and choices.

ECONOMIC DIVERSITY: "Don't put all your eggs in one basket"; reliance on more than one economic sector to generate jobs and wealth.

ECONOMIC HEALTH: Having hope, wealth and choices. The alternative to *distress*.

ECONOMIC VITALITY: Much the same as *economic health*, but with good prospects for an expanding economy and expanding options.

ECONOMIES OF SCALE: Savings that arise mainly from increased efficiency due to size, coupled with an ability to spread fixed costs across a larger base. [Day 1990, 155]

ECONOMIES OF SCOPE: Because of less functional differentiation, leaders of small towns have a broader range of responsibility and therefore a broader knowledge of what's going on in the community. Consequently, leaders of small communities have more leverage and face fewer obstacles to change than leaders of large communities. Accordingly, *economies of scope* are a major asset of small communities.

FIBER OPTICS: Fiber-optic technology allows massive quantities of information—including voice, data and video—to travel over a single hair-thin strand of glass fiber. For example, more than 8,000 telephone conversations can be transmitted simultaneously over a single optical fiber. In the New Economy, fiber optics are one of many technological advances that provide new opportunities for individuals, businesses, schools, communities and other institutions.

FOOD PROCESSING: Taking a raw or unfinished agricultural product and further refining, enhancing or adding value to it. Examples: seasoned, ready-to-cook pasta; "instant," single-serving oatmeal; ready-to-heat soup. Although basic food processing (wheat to bread, sugar beets to sugar, pigs to bacon) has long been a way to add value to agricultural products, processing food for multiple speciality products or for niche markets is a New Economy trend.

FRONT RANGE [of the Rocky Mountains]: The first range of hills on the western Plains of the Rockies that separates the Great Plains from the Rocky Mountains; I-25 and US-87 follow the Front Range route from Canada to Mexico.

GARDENING: An economic development strategy that focuses on adding value to existing assets—such as strengthening existing businesses—rather than persuading businesses in other states or towns to relocate; the opposite of "smokestack chasing" or "industrial recruitment."

GLOBAL VILLAGE: A term implying the worldwide character of a "community of networks."

GLOBALISM: The policy of treating the whole world as a single arena of interaction.

GOLD [program]: A South Dakota initiative designed to encourage communities to plan, initiate and carry out a program for community and economic development, sponsored by the Governor's Office of Economic Development.

GRASSROOTS: Coming from local sources; "bottoms up" as opposed to "top down"; usually implies a nongovernmental activity. See also *bootstraps* and *civic leadership*.

GROSS STATE PRODUCT (GSP): A state's share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the total value of all goods and services produced within a particular state, as estimated by the US Department of Commerce.

HINTERLAND: The area from which a city, town or other place collects raw materials or other assets, from which it makes value-added goods and services. In the old days, the hinterland was the contiguous area surrounding a town or city, its sphere of influence. Today, because of transportation and telecommunications technologies, the hinterland of a city or town may be located in a noncontiguous area hundreds or even thousands of miles away, not necessarily just the surrounding area. See also *backyard*.

HOMESTEAD ACT OF 1862: A system of free land grants of 160 acres (later expanded) for settlers willing to live on the land for at least five years. The Homestead Act effectively opened up millions of acres west of the Mississippi to settlement and cultivation.

HUMID AREA STANDARDS: Standards developed in the more humid areas of the eastern seaboard, southeast or west coast. Kraenzel argued that people cannot understand the Plains if they apply "ideas from the humid area" to this non-humid region. [1955, 209]

HUNTING [e.d. strategy]: An economic development strategy that uses industrial recruitment or "smokestack chasing" to create jobs and expand wealth in the community. See also *gardening*.

INCOME STATEMENT APPROACH: The traditional method of community economic assessment that looks at flow variables such as population, employment or personal income loss or gain; analogous to the income statement of a firm. See also *balance sheet approach*.

INFORMATION REVOLUTION: The 20th century equivalent of the industrial revolution.

INMIGRATION: People moving into a place or area. Population grows as a consequence of natural increases (births minus deaths) and migration (foreign and domestic).

LATERAL LINKAGES: Ties between communities of similar size and economic makeup, as opposed to vertical (hierarchical) linkages between larger and smaller communities.

MAIN STREET [program]: A community program combining economic development and preservation to enhance commercial districts; sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in partnership with states and localities.

"MALLING OF AMERICA": The trend that challenged the primacy of downtowns with suburban shopping malls as the center of economic activity in America's towns and cities. [See Kowinski 1985.] The consolidation of retail outlets (both into bigger stores and the growth of chain stores) has been significantly fueled by suburbanization, the "*urbanization* of *rural* taste" and federal tax policies.

METROPOLITAN COUNTY: See *Metropolitan Statistical Area* (MSA).

META PLANNING: A method of group consensus-forcing, developed by IBM; used in the Roundtable on the Future of the Great Plains.

MICROPOLITAN AREA: A county of at least 40,000 population with a central urban place of 15,000-50,000 population. [Thomas 1989]

METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA (MSA): One or more entire counties defined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as being economically and socially integrated; having a large population nucleus (a central city of 50,000+ population) or an urbanized area that reaches 50,000 in population; and is located in a county or counties with at least 100,000 population.

MULTICOMMUNITY COLLABORATION: Cooperative efforts between two or more communities. These may range from small scale, single purpose projects to long term multipurpose development corporations. A formalized collaboration may be referred to as a *cluster*.

NEST BUILDERS [program]: A multicommunity economic development organization in Custer County (Broken Bow), Nebraska.

NEW BOURGEOISIE: The class of business and professional service brokers (e.g., academics, engineers, public administrators, scientists, consultants) which grew rapidly in the 1980s, fueling both suburbanization and growth in secondary cities. [Knox 1991, 183]

NEW ECONOMY: The result of two decades of tumultuous change, the New Economy is characterized by global competition in global markets, the fragmentation of mass markets into niche markets, intensive use of information and technology intensity, entrepreneurship and innovation, rapid turnover in products and markets, and the growing economic importance of leisure and tourism activities.

NEW LOCALISM: Term coined by William Schweke and Graham Toft. Here, an umbrella term for the growing importance of community-level leadership and action, and community self-determination; a result, in part, of the changing roles of state and federal government. (See Chapter 4.)

NICHE MARKET: The opposite of "mass market"; small and often rapidly changing markets that require flexible management systems and specialized or tailored products or services; an important characteristic of the New Economy.

NONMETROPOLITAN COUNTY: All counties not defined by OMB as Metropolitan (part of an MSA); often used as a synonym for "*rural.*"

NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (NAFTA): A treaty to reduce restrictions on trade and investment among Canada, the US and Mexico.

OLD ECONOMY: The "old" economy is a product of the Industrial Revolution; based on mass markets, large manufacturing firms, long product cycles and hierarchical management and labor systems; as opposed to *New Economy.*

OUTMIGRATION: People moving out of a place or area.

PARADIGM: model; standard; criterion; framework; a mind-set; point of view; perspective. In this report, we argue for a "new paradigm" for assessing community vitality and viability.

PEOPLE-CENTERED: An approach that relies on data about what people think is important; as opposed to model-centered, which superimposes external models and user data because they are available.

PLACE: A community of people who interact; a particular geographic area or locality; the region in which people interact; an arena of shared experiences.

POLICY SCIENCES: Concerned with developing and applying systematic knowledge to improve policy making and policy outcomes. Policy sciences integrates several branches of knowledge—including behavioral, management, physical and life sciences, engineering and other disciplines. It bridges pure and applied research and "accepts tacit knowledge and personal experience as important sources of knowledge...." [Dror 1971]

PRIDE [program]: A self-help program for people "to take the initiative in making their community a better place to live and work"; sponsored by the State of Kansas Community Development Division and the Kansas State University Cooperative Extension Service.

QUALITY OF LIFE: Aspects of a place that are important to people in everyday life—such as good health, good jobs at good wages, home ownership, leisure time, education, personal mobility, public safety, clean environment, social and cultural amenities.

RED RIVER TRADE CORRIDOR: A grassroots, civic initiative to make it easier for people and communities along the Red River of the North in North Dakota, Minnesota and Manitoba to interact and do business with each other.

RESOURCE BROKER: Acting as a link between a user and a provider; helping a community find and mobilize information, money or advice. We believe that the state should be a resource broker as much as a *resource provider*.

RESOURCE PROVIDER: Directly giving information, money or advice to a user; the primary source of community assistance. We believe that the state should encourage others (nonprofits, private companies, other governmental or quasigovernmental units) to invest in and provide services and information to communities, i.e., serve as *resource brokers*.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN TRADE CORRIDOR: A multistate initiative to link people and communities along the spine of the Rocky Mountains from Canada to Mexico City via new surface and air transportation corridors.

RURAL: A residual category used to define every place except *urban* areas; "a rural classification need not imply farm residence or a sparsely settled area," says the Census Bureau, "since a [place] is rural as long as it is outside an urbanized area and has fewer than 2,500 inhabitants." [User's Guide Glossary of the Census Bureau, 1990]

RURAL RENAISSANCE: During the 1970s many nonmetropolitan areas and smaller towns gained population after decades of decline; however, the trend reversed in the 1980s, and MSA definitions were expanded by OMB to exclude more fringe areas from a "rural" definition.

SMALL BUSINESS: Firm with fewer than 100 employees. [Cognetics 1990]

STAKEHOLDER: Individuals, agencies, businesses or other groups that have a direct interest (e.g., financial, emotional, political) in the outcome of an issue, activity or event. We believe that the state should redefine its economic development role, to be a broker among stakeholders. See *resource broker* and *resource provider*.

STANDARD INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION (SIC): A standard system that classifies firms by function. The largest (single digit) breakouts are agriculture, fishing and forestry; mining; manufacturing; wholesale trade; retail trade; finance, insurance and real estate (FIRE); services; and government.

START [program]: A program in Nebraska that combines leadership training with a self-help, *grassroots* approach to local economic development.

STRATEGIC PLANNING: A systematic, action-oriented method to manage change, concentrating on selected issues and scarce resoucres, strengths and weaknesses. [So and Getz, *ed.* 1988, 406]

STRATEGY: A process that provides the logical framework and set of coordinated decisions linking development goals with the actions required to achieve them. Here, the proposed strategy—with economic, social, environmental, and spatial components—specifies the major problems to be alleviated and the opportunities to be realized by short- to medium-term investments in specific projects.

"SUSTAINABLE" [development]: Within a country or region, gradual change characterized by economic growth, increased social equity, constructive modification of ecosystems, and maintenance of the natural resource base. See also *balanced growth*.

TELECOMPUTING: The use of telecommunications and computers in combination. New telecomputing applications—voice mail, fax mail, computer teleconferencing, information utilities and others—are transforming where and how people and institutions do business.

TELEMARKETING: Using telecommunications (e.g., phones and faxes) to reach customers across the nation from an office located anywhere that has the requisite telecommunications infrastructure.

THIRD WAVE [of e.d.]: Ross' description of a capacity-building strategy for economic development based on fostering competition, leveraging public resources, using existing resources more efficiently and increasing public accountability. The first wave was based on industrial recruitment, *hunting*, while the second wave was based on services provided by the public-sector to promote capacity building. [*Points West* 1990, 7]

URBAN: Defined by the US Census Bureau as all places or communities of more than 2,500 people.

URBANIZATION: A process by which the attitudes and practices of urban people are carried over into a rural area and rural lifestyle.

URBANIZED AREA (UA): "A population concentration of at least 50,000 inhabitants, generally consisting of a central city and the surrounding, closely settled, contiguous territory (suburbs)... based primarily on a population density of at least 1,000 persons per square mile." [User's Guide Glossary of the Census Bureau, 1990]

VALUE-ADDED: "Making wheat into wheaties;" taking a raw or unfinished material and further processing it, thus "adding value" to the product. Usually defined by economists as the "dollar value of final sales less the cost of materials purchased." [Shaffer 1989, 262]

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Great Plains Advisory Group

Composition

The Great Plains Project Advisory Group (PAG) is constituted by rural and economic development practitioners, economists, sociologists, agricultural and business specialists and others who are knowledgeable about the Great Plains and/or community and rural development.

Functions

- To provide guidance and advice concerning the project research program.
- To review and react to project and research designs.
- To review and react to project research results.

Meetings

- Lou Higgs, senior fellow, serves as the convenor of the PAG.
- The PAG will meet once or twice during the conduct of the project. Most of the group's work will be accomplished via mail, fax and teleconferencing.
- The PAG will generally meet in Denver.

Members

Tom **Anding**, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

Jeffrey C. **Bauer**, The Bauer Group, Hillrose, CO

Mark R. **Drabenstott**, Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City

Robert **Einsweiler**, AICP, The Lincoln Land Institute, Cambridge, MA

Donald **Hicks**. The Bruton Center for Development Studies, University of Texas at Dallas

Marvin **Kaiser**, Kansas Center for Rural Initiatives, Manhattan

Larry **Leistritz**, Department of Agricultural Economics, North Dakota State University, Fargo

Vicki **Luther**/Milan **Wall**, Heartland Center for Leadership Development, Lincoln, NE

Sara **Mazie**, Economic Research Service, US Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC

John S. **Niles**, Global Telematics, Seattle, WA

Marty **Strange**, Center for Rural Affairs, Walthill, NE

John **Waeltl**, Department of Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Business, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces

Bill **Weida**, Department of Economics and Business, The Colorado College, Colorado Springs

John **Whisman**, Rural Development Consultant, Port Republic, MD

Dissemination of Findings

A. Print Media Coverage of the Center's Great Plains Project

"Gardeners, not hunters, we should be," by Rona K. Johnson, *Grand Forks* (North Dakota) *Herald*, December 20, 1991.

"Fairbury Could Learn A Lot From Superior, NE," *The Fairbury* (Nebraska) *Journal-News*, November 15, 1991.

"Center's quest: How Brush beats odds and prospers," by Joel Kleg, *The Fort Morgan* (Colorado) *Times*, November 8, 1991.

"Study Aims To Find Out Why Town of Brush Isn't Dying," Associated Press Dispatch, *The Aspen* (Colorado) *Daily News*, October 31, 1991.

"Brush thrives, study wants to know why," by Deborah Frazier, *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), October 30, 1991.

"Center for the New West to convene roundtable on rural health care and community development," *Burlington* (Colorado) *Record*, October 17, 1991.

"Sustainable Communities," *The Western Planner*, September-October 1991.

"America's economic future said not as gloomy as depicted," by Robynn Tysver, *The* (Nebraska) *Star*, August 2, 1991.

"New West Center will study Superior," *The Superior* (Nebraska) *Express*, July 25, 1991.

"Frontier and its people alive and kicking," by Bill Hornby, *The Denver Post*, July 25, 1991.

"Prospering Again on the Prairie," by David Lamb, *Los Angeles Times*, June 10, 1991.

"Distant hoofbeats: Buffalo Commons—a plan to turn back the hands of time," a roundtable discussion, *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), May 12, 1991.

"Center for the New West Demonstration Projects Help 2 Communities," by Joe Wheelen, *Associated Press*, February 16, 1991.

"One Goal of Great Plains Study: Debunking Park Proposal," by David C. Beeder, *Omaha World Herald*, December 23, 1990.

"A Century After the West Was 'Won'," by Brad Knickerbocker, *The Christian Science Monitor*, December 18, 1990.

"Westward Ho to an 'Archipelago Society'," by Brad Knickerbocker, *The Christian Science Monitor*, December 18, 1990.

"Revisionist Historian Lassos the Mythic West," by Brad Knickerbocker, *The Christian Science Monitor*, December 18, 1990.

"You survive because everyone else has walked in your shoes," by Donald Dale Jackson, *Smithsonian*, November 1990.

"Critics skewer dreamers over Great Plains' future," by Darcy Deleon, *Reno Gazette-Journal*, October 19, 1990.

"Professor: West's farming, ranching to give way to recreation," by Darcy DeLeon, *Reno Gazette-Journal*, October 18, 1990.

"Where the Buffalo Roamed," by Hugh Sidey, *Time*, September 24, 1990.

"The Poppers and the Plains," by Anne Mathews, *The New York Times Magazine*, June 24, 1990.

"Westward NO," by Dayton Duncan, *The Boston Globe Magazine*, June 10,1990.

"Eulogy for Great Plains termed premature," by Joe Garner, *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), April 24, 1990.

"CU West center gives Hornby Stegner award," *The Denver Post*, March 9, 1990.

B. Articles by Center Associates on Great Plains Project topics.

Shepard, John C. "Leadership through Partnerships: The National Trust's Main Street Program as a Community Economic Development Tool." *Urban Design and Preservation Quarterly*, American Planning Association, Spring 1992.

Giannetti, Claudia and John C. Shepard. "Study finds change—not decline—in Great Plains." *Points West Chronicle* (Denver), Winter 1991-92.

Shepard, John C. "New Economy communities." *A&P Planning News*, University of Colorado at Denver School of Architecture and Planning, Winter 1992.

Giannetti, Claudia. "The new role of the public library in community economic development." *The Burlington* (Colorado) *Record*, January 30, 1992.

Giannetti, Claudia. "A new secret weapon in community development." *The Fort Morgan* (Colorado) *Times*, January 27, 1992.

Giannetti, Claudia. "Libraries play new economic development role." *Greeley* (Colorado) *Tribune*, January 19, 1992.

Shepard, John C. "Main Street works, not in Colo." *The Fort Morgan* (Colorado) *Times*, October 29, 1991. An analysis of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Program in Great Plains states.

Shepard, John C. "Making sense of the suburbs." CU-*Denver Advocate*, October 9, 1991. Commentary on Edge Cities.

Shepard, John C. "Center looks at future of Great Plains." *The Planning News*, University of Colorado at Denver School of Architecture and Planning, August 1991.

Murphy, Colleen. "Center Study to Take A Fresh Look At the Future of the Great Plains." *Points West* (Denver), Autumn 1990.

Hornby, Bill. "Plains can be the Great American Promise." *The Denver Post*, May 4, 1990.

The following columns by Philip M. Burgess, president of the Center, on the Great Plains and rural issues appeared in the *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver) and were distributed nationally to over 200 newspapers by the Scripps Howard News Service.

"Gaming proves a bad gamble," Nov. 5, 1991.
"Three responses to New Economy," May 23, 1991.
"Librarians help Littleton grow," Sept. 13, 1990.
"Far-flung business, small-town roots," Aug. 23, 1990.
"Paonia's version of perestroika," June 28, 1990.
"Telework adding flexibility to jobs," June 7, 1990.
"Global enterprise has rural roots," May 31, 1990.
"Gardeners grow better economies," May 24, 1990.
"Strong cities vital to Great Plains," March 8, 1990.
"Negative articles a Plains disservice," March 1, 1990.

C. Presentations at Local, State or Regional Meetings and Conferences by Center Associates.

January 20, 1992 - Brush, CO
Kent **Briggs** speaks at the annual Chamber of Commerce dinner.

January 17, 1992 - Phoenix, AZ
Phil **Burgess** gives speech for the Morrison Institute for Public Policy to Arizona legislators regarding economy, including the Great Plains Project.

January 10, 1992 - Denver, CO
Phil **Burgess** has speaking engagement with the Colorado Power Council.

December 19, 1991 - Grand Forks, ND
Phil **Burgess** has speaking engagement with the Regional Economic Development Corporation regarding the Great Plains Project.

December 11, 1991 - Denver, CO
Phil **Burgess** gives speech to Midwest Electric Consumers Association regarding the Great Plains Project.

December 6, 1991 - Denver, CO
Phil **Burgess** gives speech to US Dept. of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) Conference regarding the Great Plains Project.

December 4, 1991 - Denver, CO
Center Roundtable on the Future of the Great Plains.

November 8, 1991 - Gillette, WY
Phil **Burgess** gives speech to Wyoming Planning Association.

November 1, 1991 - Albuquerque, NM
Lou **Higgs** gives speech to the Institute of Management Accountants Economic Development Conference on measurement problems in rural development.

November 1, 1991 - Casper, WY
Phil **Burgess** gives speech to Wyoming Heritage Society.

October 24, 1991 - Socorro, NM
Lou **Higgs** makes a presentation to the Governor's Rural Development Council on the Great Plains project.

October 8, 1991 - Buffalo, WY
Phil **Burgess** delivers the keynote address to the Big Horn County Economic Development annual meeting on the demography and destiny of western America.

October 2, 1991 - Chapel Hill, NC
Phil **Burgess** is an invited participant in a Southern Regional Policy Roundtable by DeWitt John of the Aspen Institute.

September 27, 1991 - Midland-Odessa, TX
Lou **Higgs** gives speech on the Great Plains in the New Economy at the annual meeting of the Texas Association of Regional Councils.

September 26, 1991 - Brush, CO
Edie **Dulacki** addresses the Brush Rotary Club on rural community development, the Center's rural health care project and the Great Plains Project.

September 23, 1991 - Cheyenne, WY
Phil **Burgess** keynotes the annual meeting of the Western Legislative Conference (WLC) on American resurgence in the 1990s.

September 12, 1991 - Sheridan, WY

Phil **Burgess** keynotes the Annual Old West Trails Foundation meeting on the need for cooperation in promoting overseas tourism in western and Plains states.

September 6, 1991 - Las Cruces, NM

Lou **Higgs** gives speech to the New Mexico Business Leaders Forum regarding grassroots regionalism.

August 30, 1991 - Albuquerque, NM

Lou **Higgs** gives speech on technology and economic development in the Great Plains to the Southwest Economic Development District Conference.

August 1, 1991 - Lincoln, NE

Phil **Burgess** gives speech to the Annual *Western Planner* meeting on New Economy changes in the Great Plains region.

July 11, 1991 - Denver, CO

Phil **Burgess** addresses graduates of The Leading Edge Small Business Management Program on economic trends affecting small businesses in Colorado and other Plains states.

May 9, 1991 - Denver, CO

Colleen **Murphy** makes a presentation about the Center's Great Plains Project to students and faculty in the University of Denver's Department of Geography.

March 28, 1991 - Billings, MT

Kent **Briggs** presents a summary of the Center's Great Plains Project to the monthly meeting of Regional Unity.

February 27, 1991 - Des Moines, IA

Phil **Burgess** is dinner speaker at the Iowa Department of Economic Development on the forces causing economic change in the Great Plains.

January 31,1991 - Denver, CO

Phil **Burgess** gives the keynote address on western and heartland economic trends to the annual meeting of The Columbine Venture Fund.

January 7, 1991 - Billings, MT

Phil **Burgess** keynotes the Regional Unity Partnership opening session on the Great Plains Project.

November 1, 1990 - Billings, MT

Phil **Burgess** addresses the Regional Unity Meeting of eastern Montana civic leaders on rural development strategies on the Great Plains.

October 18, 1990 - Reno, NV

Phil **Burgess** and Bob **Wurmstedt** attend the Western History Association meeting where **Burgess** debates Rutgers University Professor Frank **Popper** on the future of the Great Plains.

October 5, 1990 - Sioux Falls, SD
Phil **Burgess** address a Forward Sioux Falls meeting on American resurgence in the 90's and tours credit card operations of CitiCorp.

October 5, 1990 - Aberdeen, SD
Phil **Burgess** keynotes at the annual meeting of the South Dakota Municipal League on the future of the Great Plains.

September 13, 1990 - Billings, MT
Phil **Burgess** attends a Regional Unity organization meeting and gives the luncheon address to mayors of eastern Montana on the importance of inter-urban cooperation in rural development.

April 22, 1990 - Greenwood Village, CO
Phil and Mary Sue **Burgess** host a reception and dinner for Frank and Deborah **Popper** of Rutgers University, the authors of the "Buffalo Commons" proposal.

March 10 - 1990 - Billings, MT
Phil **Burgess** addresses civic leaders from eastern Montana on rural development in the Great Plains.

D. Media briefings and interviews with Center associates

January 8, 1992
Phil **Burgess** gives an interview with Thadius Herrick of *Rocky Mountain News*, (Denver) regarding the U.S. economy, including the Great Plains region.

January 3, 1992
Phil **Burgess** gives an interview with KMGH - TV (Denver), for "Crossroads" regarding the economy, including the Great Plains Project.

November 13, 1991
Phil **Burgess** gives an interview with NBC News regarding the Great Plains Project.

November 7, 1991 - Brush, CO
NBC News crew accompanies Center team to Brush, Colorado for story on Great Plains Project; NBC also films in Superior, NE.

August 2, 1991 - Denver, CO
Phil **Burgess**, Kent **Briggs** and Bob **Wurmstedt** meet at Center offices with David **Gergen**, U.S. *News & World Report* Editor-at-Large and MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour commentator, to discuss regional and national political and economic trends and issues, including the Great Plains Project.

August 2, 1991 - Denver, CO
Bob **Wurmstedt** briefs Judith **Crossen**, new Rocky Mountain Regional bureau chief for *Reuters News Agency*, on Center programs, western issues and the Great Plains Project.

July 11, 1991 - Denver, CO

Bob **Wurmstedt** briefs Soma **Golden**, national editor of *The New York Times*, on Center activities, including the Great Plains Project

June 13, 1991 Minneapolis, MN

Phil **Burgess** and Bob **Wurmstedt** meet with the editorial board of the *Minneapolis Tribune* on Center activities in the Great Plains.

May 23, 1991 - Denver, CO

Phil **Burgess** is interviewed by Bob **McNamara** of CBS News on the Great Plains and rural development.

May 7, 1991 - Denver, CO

Phil **Burgess**, Kent **Briggs** and Bob **Wurmstedt** discuss the Great Plains Project with David **Lamb** of the *Los Angeles Times*.

February 28, 1991 - Des Moines, IA

Phil **Burgess** meets with the editorial board of the *Des Moines Register* on the Great Plains Project.

November 9, 1990 - Denver, CO

Bob **Wurmstedt**, Phil **Burgess** and Kent **Briggs** are interviewed by Jim **Robbins** of *The New York Times* on the long term sustainability of the western and heartland economy.

October 23, 1990 - Denver, CO

Bob **Wurmstedt**, Phil **Burgess** and Kent **Briggs** are interviewed by Jim **Coates**, Denver bureau chief for the *Chicago Tribune* on land use trends in the western and Plains states.

October 4, 1990 - Washington, DC

Phil **Burgess** is interviewed by Scott **Simon** of National Public Radio on the Great Plains Project.

E. Briefings by Center associates for public officials, business leaders and researchers

March 3, 1992 - Oberlin, KS

John **Shepard** meets with the city administrator and Chamber of Commerce director of Oberlin for an update on their telecommunications project and Main Street program and the Center's Great Plains Project.

March 3, 1992 - Wray, CO

John **Shepard** tours the Wray Rehabilitation and Recreation Center, a privately-funded facility under construction in northeast Colorado.

March 2, 1992 - Sterling, CO

John **Shepard** meets with the Director of the City of Sterling Urban Renewal Authority about Sterling's economic development efforts, including the Main Street program, and the Center's Great Plains Project.

January 15, 1992 - Denver, CO
Phil **Burgess** meets with Colorado Governor Roy **Romer** on the Great Plains Project.

November 22, 1991 - Denver, CO
Phil **Burgess** meets with the Midwest Electric Consumer Association regarding the Great Plains Project.

November 13, 1991 - Denver, CO
Phil **Burgess** meets with Jenifer **Bader** of US WEST regarding Great Plains Project.

October 18, 1991 - Denver, CO
Edie **Dulacki** and Jeff **Bauer** of the Bauer Group host a "Roundtable on Rural Health Care and Community Development" at the Center's Denver office to kick off the Health Policy Council's rural health care project.

October 2, 1991 - Denver, CO
Claudia **Giannetti**, Matt **Muehlbauer**, Colleen **Murphy** and John **Shepard** meet with the manager of environmental programs of the Virginia Water Project (VWP), Roanoke, Virginia, about the Great Plains Project and VMP's emerging interest in rural development.

September 19, 1991 - Denver, CO
Lou **Higgs**, Colleen **Murphy** and John **Shepard** make a presentation on the Great Plains Project to US Dept. of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA)-Denver regional office administrators.

September 12, 1991 - Denver, CO
Claudia **Giannetti**, Matt **Muehlbauer**, Colleen **Murphy** and John **Shepard** meet with the Executive Director of the 10-state Great Plains Agricultural Council about the Great Plains Project, the mission and activities of the Council and possible collaboration on a regional roundtable.

August 22, 1991 - Denver, CO
John **Shepard** meets with the Director of the High Plains Heritage Center, Spearfish, South Dakota, about the Great Plains Project and the High Plains Center's education and communication programs.

August 7, 1991 - Denver, CO
Colleen **Murphy** and John **Shepard** meet with the Chief Economist and other officials of the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) about the Great Plains Project and the impact of global trade, changing technologies and environmental regulation on agriculture and the rural economy.

August 6, 1991 - Fort Collins, CO
Claudia **Giannetti** and John **Shepard** meet with the director of the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project about the Great Plains Project.

August 1, 1991 - Lincoln, NE

John **Shepard** meets with the Director of the Lincoln Haymarket Development Corporation about historic preservation and community economic development methods.

July 15, 1991 - Denver, CO

Claudia **Giannetti**, Colleen **Murphy** and John **Shepard** meet with officials and regional field representatives of the Colorado Department of Local Affairs about the Great Plains Project.

July 10, 1991 - Denver, CO

Kent **Briggs**, Lou **Higgs**, Claudia **Giannetti** and John **Shepard** meet with officials from Oberlin, KS, to review their western Kansas rural telecommunications project and discuss the Great Plains Project.

May 31, 1991 - Walthill, NE

Phil **Burgess**, Lou **Higgs**, Colleen **Murphy** and Bob **Wurmstedt** meet with Marty **Strange**, the director of the Center for Rural Affairs (CRA) about CRA's mission and programs to assist rural businesses and farmers and the role of agriculture in the transformation of the Great Plains region.

May 28, 1991 - Topeka, KS

Lou **Higgs** and Colleen **Murphy** meet with the deputy secretary of the Kansas Department of Commerce about Kansas economic and rural development policy and programs in Governor **Finney**'s administration.

May 28,1991 - Lawrence, KS

Lou **Higgs** and Colleen **Murphy** meet with the director of the Kansas Center for Community Economic Development and the coordinator of the Community Strategic Planning Program about their work to help Kansas rural communities develop economic development strategies.

May 28, 1991 - Kansas City, MO

Lou **Higgs** and Colleen **Murphy** meet with the assistant vice president and chief economist for the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City about economic indicators for measuring vitality in the Great Plains region.

May 28, 1991 - Manhattan, KS

Lou **Higgs** and Colleen **Murphy** make a presentation to Kansas State University Center for Rural Initiatives on the Center's Great Plains Project.

May 7, 1991 Denver, CO

Phil **Burgess**, Claudia **Giannetti**, Colleen **Murphy** and John **Shepard** meet with Mr. Grillo **Pasquarrelli**, Director of Rural Development for the European Community (Brussels) and an Eisenhower Fellow, about the Great Plains Project and differences in environmental and rural development policy in Europe and the US.

April 10, 1991 - Denver, CO

Lou **Higgs** chairs first meeting of Great Plains Project Advisory Committee.

January 11, 1991 - Denver, CO

Kent **Briggs**, Phil **Burgess**, Edie **Dulacki** and Colleen **Murphy** meet with the Denver Regional Director of the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) to discuss the Great Plains Project.

October 30, 1990 - Denver, CO

Phil **Burgess** and Kent **Briggs** meet with Russ **Youmans**, director of the Oregon-based Western Rural Development Center (WRDC), to discuss the Great Plains Project.

October 5, 1990 - Pierre, SD

Phil **Burgess** meets with South Dakota Governor George **Mickelson**'s chief of staff to brief him on the findings from a Center study on job creation in South Dakota.

Special Studies and Papers

The following reports and working papers are available upon request from the Center for the New West:

GP-001 Murphy, Colleen. *Survey of Successful Communities*. Denver: Center for the New West. January 1991.

GP-002 Quantic, Cathy. *The Great Plains, Canada and Mexico: Policy Issues in Rural Development and the Free Trade Agreement*. Denver: Center for the New West. August 1991.

GP-003 Shepard, John C. *Leadership Through Partnerships: The National Trust's Main Street Program as a Community Economic Development Tool*. Denver: Center for the New West. November 1991.

GP-004 Heartland Center for Leadership Development. *A Case Study of Superior, Nebraska*. Denver: Center for the New West. November 1991.

GP-005 Giannetti, Claudia. *The New Role of Librarians and Libraries in Economic Development*. Denver: Center for the New West. December 1991; *The Burlington Record*, January 30, 1992; and *The Fort Morgan Times*, January 27, 1992.

GP-006 Murphy, Colleen, Louis D. Higgs and John C. Shepard. *Roundtable on the Future of the Great Plains*. Denver: Center for the New West. December 1991.

GP-007 Murphy, Colleen. *Survey of the Future of the Plains*. Denver: Center for the New West. January 1992.

GP-008 Murphy, Colleen, Louis D. Higgs and John C. Shepard. *A Case Study of Brush, Colorado*. Denver: Center for the New West. February 1992.

GP-009 Drabenstott, Mark and Tim R. Smith. *The Changing Great Plains Economy: New Directions for Economic Policy*. Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. March 20, 1992.

GP-010 Higgs, Louis D. and Claudia Giannetti. *The Economic Development Strategies of the Great Plains States*. Denver: Center for the New West. Forthcoming April 1992.

GP-011 Shepard, John C. *Redefining "Place": Community and Vitality in the New Economy*. Denver: Center for the New West. Forthcoming Summer 1992. (Master's Thesis, University of Colorado at Denver)

Research Approach

The research team's activities included:

Literature review
The year-long review included academic and professional journals, books, government and private reports and newspapers and magazines from within and outside of the region. Our intent was to capture both the rigor of academic thought and the nuances of "everyday life." A glossary of terms is attached as Appendix A, the project bibliography as Appendix B. We found the literature on the region to be very rich and insightful.

A methodical review of quantitative indicators
We examined the wide range of indicators used to describe the Great Plains region. We found many that measured distress but few that measured vitality. We found many that measured pathologies but few that measured well-being. We found many "income statements" measuring change and flows but few "balance sheets" depicting basic assets and liabilities. The quantitative indicators also often lacked timeliness and comparability. It is our view that the models and indicators used in quantitative analysis of economic and social charge require serious re-examination. The use of methodologies that are simply reproducible (and familiar) with little regard for validity is not enough when the lives of people and communities are at stake.

Community case studies
The research team conducted two in-depth case studies, including intensive field studies. First, we worked with colleagues at the Heartland Center for Leadership Development (HCLD) to find a town we could examine closely. We wanted a town located in a county identified as "distressed" by the Buffalo Commons study. We were looking for a town that traditional indicators and a cursory glance would say is in trouble. This process led us to select Superior in Nuckolls County, Nebraska.

HCLD developed a case study methodology, and HCLD and Center staff conducted the field study in Superior in August 1991. Using the HCLD case study model, Center staff then selected Brush, in Morgan County, Colorado, and conducted a field study there in November 1991. We selected Brush as a community in a "transition" county: it had not been labeled "distressed," but it had been through hard times and now appeared highly successful. The results of these studies are available separately from the Center for the New West as GP-004 (Superior) and GP-008 (Brush).

(See Appendix E.) The research team also completed secondary analysis of existing case studies.

Surveys

Survey of Successful Communities. From October 1990 through January 1991, the research team worked through state agencies in 12 states to identify small communities (under 10,000 population) that appeared to be successfully fighting decline. The team conducted telephone interviews with community leaders in towns in seven Great Plains states—Colorado, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas and Wyoming. As a product of this activity, we developed Community Profiles for 12 Great Plains towns. (Special study GP-001)

Roundtable on the Future of the Great Plains. On December 4, 1991, the Center convened 39 people from 9 states, including state and local planners, local elected and appointed officials, local and state economic development specialists, tribal representatives, and university research and technical assistance center directors. The purpose of the Roundtable was to gather information about the challenges facing Great Plains communities and what to do about them. The research team used a modified version of Meta Planning--a visioning, consensus-forcing process developed by IBM—to focus participants' thinking in three key areas: (1) critical issues, problems or opportunities facing communities in the region over the next decade; (2) an optimistic vision of the region's communities in the year 2001; and (3) principal steps needed to achieve that vision. (Special study GP-006)

Survey of the Future of the Great Plains. To capture information similar to that sought through the Roundtable about challenges to Great Plains communities, we developed a two-page questionnaire. In December 1991, we distributed the questionnaire to more than 100 individuals from 10 states in the region. The composition of this group was similar to that of the Roundtable, except that a greater percentage of the survey group was tribal officials and representatives of local economic development districts. (Special study GP-007)

Expert panel input

The research team used informal expert review to broaden and test our ideas, methods and impressions with academics, development professionals, civic leaders and others concerned about the future of the region. In addition, we organized the Great Plains Project Advisory Group (GP-PAG) to (1) provide guidance and advice concerning the project research program; (2) review project and research designs; and (3) review project products and research results. The GP-PAG has 14 members, representing 11 states and the District of Columbia; they are rural and economic development practitioners, economists, sociologists, agricultural and business specialists and others who are knowledgeable about the Great Plains and/or community and rural development. Members include federal, state and local government and the private sector. We convened the PAG in Denver on April 15, 1991, for an all-day meeting to review project and research plans. Subsequent participation occurred via mail, fax and teleconferencing. (Appendix C)