Small Towns, Big Change

Civic engagement and rural resilience

Western Community Assessment Network (WeCAN)
Presenters

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Welcome to WeCAN!

• Three-year, USDA-funded collaboration among three states
• Seek to understand, evaluate and improve review process
• Help participating communities achieve greater success

Community Reviews. A comprehensive assessment program that provides information and tools to help communities address priorities and enhance the quality of life for residents.
What we’ll cover

• Evolution of assessment programs in three states
• WeCAN genesis and overview
• Assessments redesigned
• Future of WeCAN
• YOU!
• How did state assessment program evolve over the past 20 years?
• What were the strengths of the program as it was structured?
• What were the challenges?
WeCAN Genesis and Overview
Why WeCAN?

• Citizen dialogue
• Assessment follow up
• Uneven success
• Resources
• Evaluation
  • Best practices
  • Network weaving
Tri-State Design Team

- Three states, three years
- $500,000 (USDA NIFA AFRI)
- $40,000 (Kettering Foundation)
Deliverables

• Community assessments and evaluation
• Mini grants
• Capacity building
• Best practices publication
• Web site communityreview.org
  • Resource directory
  • Assessment map
  • How to participate
Assessment teams

- Listen and observe
- Facilitate dialogue
- Support leadership development
- Share community organizing skills
- Help identify local/non-local resources appropriate to each community.
Redesign components by state

1. How is your state program structured now?
2. Advantages of new process
3. What challenges remain?

Montana | Idaho | Wyoming
Stories of change

Ripple Mapping + Survey Data + Observation + Interviews

REMstudio.org
Ripple Effects Mapping (REM)

- AF Comm Rev
- Downtown - changed look
- Total infrastructure
- Demos value of planning
- New Bldg
- People willing to invest
- Water bond too
- CF provides
- Treat plant (4yr project) - now
- 9ves funders - shows commitment - 25m ith - support initiatives because of successes
- Have capacity to grow
- Public art
- Water tower - maintains pressure
- New sewers
- Water tank
- Chamber - Revitalization - ducks in a row - did groundwater
- Shows confidence in leadership
Ripple Effects Mapping

Participants reported the impact of first publicly financed project was so successful it led to more willingness to approve local bonds and levies.
Current and ongoing

- Data Analysis | REM Survey | Interviews
- Best Practices Guide
- First Evaluations of New Process
- Writing the next grant
  - Expand WeCan
  - Add capacity building
Your turn

• Questions
• Suggestions
• Other working models
• Getting involved
Email | LinkedIn

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